

CONSEQUENCES:

OR,

ADVENTURES

AT

RRAXALL CASTLE,

A NOVEL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY A GENTLEMAN.

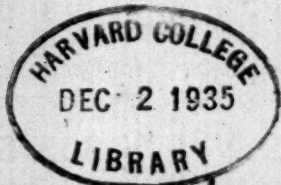
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By Thomas Steiner Carr

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE elegant Shenstone says, “ A
“ composition that enters the world
“ with a view of *improving* or *amusing*
“ it, in a polite or innocent way, has
“ a claim to our utmost indulgence,
“ even though it fail of the effect in-
“ tended.”

The Author of the following pro-
duction is too young a man himself
to pretend to *improve* others; his
humble aim is innocently to *amuse*.

If at the bar of criticism he is pronounced guilty of *a vain attempt*, he requests his judges to admit the above quoted authority in mitigation of their sentence for his *first offence*.

LONDON,
May, 1796.

CONSEQUENCES.

A NOVEL.

INTRODUCTION.

COLONEL PRYER married early in life an amiable and accomplished woman, whom, the same hour that gave our heroine birth, conveyed to unfading felicity; an event which left the little stranger and her brother, then six years old, to the sole protection of their father. That father, young and gay, was affected by this loss, as the young and gay generally are, *violently for a short period*; then re-

VOL. I. B suming

suming his wonted course of life, soon lost the remembrance of his departed wife, her dying admonitions, and the duties of a parent in the wild chace of dissipated pleasures.

His infant daughter he entrusted to the care of a distant relation of her mother, who happily possessed every necessary qualification for so important a task, as the formation of manners and culture of the female mind. This lady's name was Ashton, who resided in a pleasant village in Dorsetshire, where her husband the Rev. Mr. Ashton held a living of three hundred pounds a-year, and enjoyed the esteem and affection of every one, who had the happiness of an acquaintance with his uncommon excellence.

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The only offspring of this worthy pair was a daughter, who, being nearly of an age with Emily Pryer, imbibed for her all the affection of a sister; which was answered by a reciprocal love on the part of our heroine: their sports, their studies, their every pursuit the same. While Emily, under this happy roof, was thus obtaining every accomplishment that her situation permitted, and insensibly acquiring the habits of virtue and piety, her ill-fated brother, his father's peculiar charge, was led, as insensibly, by precept and example, into the more fashionable habits of intemperance, profligacy, and folly.

A period arrived, when the Colonel's regiment was ordered to a station

in the West Indies; at which time Charles, his son, was on a visit at Rraxall Castle, in the North of England, a seat of the Earl Rraxall, who was allied to the Colonel by a marriage with his sister. The Earl had discovered a great partiality for young Pryer, and had promised him his patronage.

When the intention of the Colonel to leave England was made known to the foster-parents of our heroine, they conceived it necessary to make some application to him concerning his future designs for his daughter, about whom he had very little concerned himself since the hour of her birth, and had even most shamefully neglected to reimburse, according to his promise,
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the expences of her board and education.

The answer of the Colonel to Mr. Ashton's letter was, "That at present his finances were in a reduced state, but, that he trusted, from the opportunities this expedition would afford him, considerably to augment them: and that at his return he meant to retire from the service, and take his daughter under his own protection."

—Mr. Ashton possessed too large a share of good sense to present this gilded prospect to his Emily; on the contrary, although, hitherto, he had concealed, from motives of sensibility, the failings of the parent from the knowledge of the child, he now most forcibly felt the necessity, by degrees,

to unfold to her the truth of her situation, to point out the probable effects of her father's dissipation; and by the most gentle methods to arm her tender mind against the frowns of fortune. It was to the early lessons of fortitude, which this policy instilled into the growing mind of our heroine, that she was so much indebted in the after scenes of her life for the energy she displayed.

Shortly after the departure of the Colonel for Jamaica, a lucrative situation in the Eastern World was obtained for young Pryer through the interest of his patron the Earl.—The space of three years, unmarked by any event of sufficient interest to be recorded, passed away; at the expiration

tion of which, Colonel Pryer returned to his native country. His riches were increased beyond his most sanguine wishes, but his health was so much impaired by the ravages of a fever, as to afford him but small hope of enjoying the wealth he had acquired.

His first step towards the amendment of an ill-spent life was the immediate performance of that justice he owed to his daughter, and to those, who had supplied to her the attentions of a parent, which he had never bestowed on her.—He bequeathed the whole of his property equally betwixt our fair heroine and her absent brother; and having, with difficulty, obtained the consent of Earl Rraxall to accept the executorship of
B 4 his

his will, and the guardianship of his daughter, he looked forward to his dissolution as to an event near at hand. —In these moments the remembrance of his wife, and of her virtues, added much to the poignancy of that internal reproof, which now tormented him, and led his thoughts towards her representative his daughter Emily; whom he now sent for to undertake the management of his family, having settled in an elegant house in Portman-square.

Emily was at this æra approaching her nineteenth year, and had never yet left the happy roof of Mr. Ashton; and notwithstanding she felt the natural glow of affection for the author of her being, yet such was the strong tie
of

of attachment, which held her soul to the worthy protectors of her infancy, and her foster-sister Louisa, that she left the loved retreat with the keenest regret, even for the arms of a father.

Nor was that regret a little heightened by the dissipated character she had heard attached to that sacred name, for which she wished to cherish a just respect, that whilst she revered the father, she might at the same time value and esteem the man.

But reflections of this nature were of no longer duration than her journey; for when she arrived at Portman-square, and was ushered into the presence of the Colonel, surprize and grief took possession of her mind, and she

wept to behold so poor a remnant of mortality.

The Colonel was in his chamber, to which he had been confined two days previous to her arrival ; and it was the unanimous opinion of his physicians, that, from the confinement of his chamber, he would only be released by the liberating hand of death.

Thus, instead of those scenes of dissipation our heroine had so much dreaded to meet, she had to encounter the more awful one, of a daily dying parent. Nor did she, with that affectation which degrades so large a number of the fair sex, fly the trying scene as too tender for her sensibility ; but with a just sense of her duty to her parent, and

and a real sensibility that taught her to feel his sufferings, she ceased not to attend him, nor quitted his room, till, with a smile of approving gratitude, he expired in her arms.—From this last act of filial duty she returned once more to Mrs. Ashton's peaceful mansion and its worthy inmates; where every countenance brightened at the return of their young favourite; and though a decent sorrow was expressed for her bereavement, the joy her presence brought eclipsed the shew of mourning.

The fortune our heroine now looked forward to possess, she hailed with double joy, in the grateful hope of repaying to this worthy family the large debt of obligations she owed them;

and the happiest of her hours were now employed in the delightful anticipation of those future pleasures and comforts which she meditated to bestow upon her first, best friends.

Such were the virtuous reveries of Emily, while her guardian, the Earl of Rraxall, was arranging the affairs of his executorship in London:—which having settled, he sent a most unwelcome and unexpected summons to our heroine, couched in the following words, and addressed to Mr. Ashton.

“The Earl of Rraxall having acceded to the desire of his late friend Colonel Pryer, to become the guardian of his daughter, acquaints the Rev. Mr. Ashton, that he has fixed upon

upon his seat in the North as the future residence of the young lady; and that he has left orders with his steward to wait on her with a carriage at the time she may signify to the bearer."

This letter from the Earl operated upon the reveries which Emily was indulging at its arrival, as a death-blow, overturning in a moment all her little schemes of useful benevolence in the neighbourhood where she was beloved, and as a passing knell, tolling the loss of the society she loved:—nor was that all;—it was a summons to repair, where she was a perfect stranger, "alike unknowing, and unknown."—It rent her heart, and caused a sympathetic sadness throughout the little domestic circle, that thus lost so much respect—

respected and beloved a member. Yet, Earl Rraxall was the representative of her father, and the trustee of her property; and to his determination she felt it her positive duty to submit, however strongly that duty was combated by her inclinations.

A week from the receipt of the letter was taken for preparation; and, to Emily, to her foster-parents, and to Louisa, the days of that week appeared but hours, and the hours, minutes, so quickly did the last evening of it seem to arrive.

It was a summer's evening—Emily loitered until a late hour alone in the garden and the orchard that joined the parsonage, taking a farewell view of the delightful spots where had passed the happy and innocent scenes of her earliest

earliest days, when she was summoned to attend the supper—Few words interrupted the pensive melancholy of our heroine, until the cloth was drawn from the table, when the good Mr. Ashton broke the dull silence—and, taking a hand of Emily's and another of Louisa's, as they sat on each side of him, "My dear children," said the venerable man, "if I could have spoken before, you should not have sat so long thus melancholy:—come, my Emily, I have been considering a plan of future operations, in which, if you perform your part punctually, I conceive we shall yet gain an advantage over the fate that separates us, and render even our separation a blessing. To-morrow, Louisa," continued he, addressing himself to his daughter,

daughter, " will deprive you of the society of one of the best young women I have ever had the happiness of knowing ; and will snatch from this humble cottage a gem that has long been its ornament, and the pride and joy of its owners.—Yet, why lament we?—Our jewel, Heaven be praised, is not taken from us to be deposited in the dark womb of earth, but only transferred to a situation where its lustre may be more widely diffused."—Emily would have spoken—" No interruption !" said Mr. Ashton, and continued—" In that situation, Emily, to drop my metaphor, to which you are now raised, the good and the evil qualities of your mind will be more often and more powerfully called into action, than in the sphere of life in which you have hitherto

hitherto moved :—and in every combat of virtue and vice that may exercise your mind, I encourage the most pleasing hopes of the issue.”—“ Oh, Sir !” said Emily, almost weeping, “ if you, if Louisa, if my dear benefactress were near me, I should hope, nay, I should be sure to conquer, but”—“ But what !—my Emily,” said Mr. Ashton, “ shall we not be with you ?” “ Sir !” cried Emily, with tokens of surprise—“ Yes,” continued Mr. Ashton, “ it is my intention that we shall be as much acquainted with each other’s thoughts as if we lived under the same roof—Converse together frequently, and communicate our ideas in the same manner as we do now.”—“ How, dear Sir, how ?” cried Emily. “ A strict epistolary correspondence, my children,

dren, betwixt each other will effect all I have represented."——A silence of some minutes ensued, occasioned by the pleasing views which this plan of Mr. Ashton immediately brought to the minds of this little party.—Mrs. Ashton and Louisa already anticipated the whole History of Rraxall Castle; and Emily felt at once the advantages of the advice she should, by this means, receive for the direction of her conduct in scenes so entirely new to her experience.

At length they all burst forth into strains of approbation and praise to Mr. Ashton; and the remainder of the evening was spent in forming that plan, on which the following correspondence was raised.

At

At the appointed hour on the ensuing morning, Earl Rraxall's steward arrived.

Amidst the tears and the blessings of all the inhabitants of the village, our heroine ascended the carriage; and, as it drove off, once again sighed an adieu to the spot she most valued on earth, and to every friend she possessed in the world.

At the appointed hour on the
day morning, the Lord's house
was opened.

And in the hour and the day
all the inhabitants of the village, our
people attended the service: and as
it drew to a close, the people of the
village, the men and women,
and to every friend the people in the
world.

LETTER I.

EMILY PRYER *to* LOUISA ASHTON.

I AM this moment, my dear Louisa, arrived at Rraxall Castle, and to my very great joy, the Earl and family are on a visit at a neighbouring seat, but their return is hourly expected.—This short respite, however, from an interview I really dread, is highly acceptable, as it affords me some small leisure to rally my drooping spirits, and arm myself with all the fortitude of which I am mistress.—Oh, Louisa! why would not fate permit me to spend

the

the remainder of my days in the sweet society I have left!—Why am I compelled to enter thus reluctantly upon unknown scenes, and play a part, to which my heart at best is cold and indifferent! and among strangers too, whose manners and dispositions, I have too much reason to apprehend, are so opposite to the simplicity and purity of those, that have long been my delight! Yet let me check this spirit of repining.—I forget whose penetrating eye surveys my folly, and fear I too often shall forget it in the course of so circumstantial a correspondence, as that in which I am engaged.—But, once for all, Louisa, tell him, tell my dear and ever honoured benefactor, that I bear this separation with the greater fortitude

tude on that very account—I feel strengthened by the remembrance of his promises to reprove my follies, and rectify my errors; and sensible of the account I owe to his judgment, even of my thoughts, how must I watch myself to gain that approbation, which I estimate cheap at the sacrifice of all I possess.

I requested to be shewn my apartments as soon as I arrived, and, as you perceive, have already taken possession. The rooms are such as might be expected in an old Gothic castle, very grand, and very gloomy.

Adjoining my chamber is a very convenient dressing-room on the one hand,

hand, and on the other a study, perfectly retired, and well stored with the implements of my new profession—scribbling. An old-fashioned 'scrutoire and a book-case are the principal pieces of furniture in this room, and the shelves of the latter are empty—I am, of course, very glad that I have brought my own little collection, which I am now going to arrange in their new apartments.

I am summoned!—Louisa, they are returned!—Now, Emily Pryer, be valiant!

It is over, Louisa!—I have seen my guardian—Yes!—the dreaded interview

view is past, and now for an attempt at describing it :

I was ushered with great ceremony into a very superb drawing-room, at the entrance of which the Earl met me, congratulated me upon my safe arrival, and apologized for his absence in a very condescending manner, at least, he doubtless thought it such.—The appellation he was pleased to bestow upon me, was “ Child;” and he did me the honour to take my hand, and present me in a very formal manner to the company present, which consisted of his daughter Lady Charlotte, a Dowager Lady Saville, and Sir Henry, a young Baronet, her son.—Poor I, doubtless, behaved silly enough; I rallied my spirits, however,

and looked as chearful as I could. Having passed through the ceremony of introduction, the Earl entered into conversation with Sir Henry, but first recommended me to the attention of his daughter, Lady Charlotte.—This young lady must be very unhappy, Louisa, or I am a very mistaken physiognomist, for I never saw grief more strongly depicted in any countenance; she scarcely ever lifted her eyes from the ground, sighed frequently, was extremely absent in her conversation, and in short, betrayed so many symptoms of a troubled mind, that I lost my own apprehensions in the compassion I felt for her. Lady Saville, I am afraid, is proud, at least she is very reserved; she appears about fifty; her person bears the strong vestiges of youthful beauty,

beauty, and the little she said was pertinent and sensible. Sir Henry, after some very earnest conversation with my guardian, joined us. It would be presumptuous in such a girl as your Emily, to rely upon her own judgment of faces, but I cannot help being prepossessed in this young Baronet's favour. —I think I never saw a better countenance; so open and manly, yet such a becoming modesty; there appears firmness without presumption, and diffidence with valour. His address answered my presentiment in his favour. He paid me the the respectful attention due to a stranger, with the affability of an old acquaintance; but an affability as different from that assumed by my guardian, as the natural bloom of health to the artificial tint of rouge.

The Earl had taken Lady Charlotte aside, and Sir Henry remained in conversation with us near half an hour: he appears to have a very great affection for the dowager, and takes a pleasure in paying her every attention.—An admirable trait in a young man's character! is it not Louisa?—He is certainly a man of feeling too, for something, that the Earl had said to Lady Charlotte, so much affected her, that, bursting into tears, she was hurrying to the door under the greatest embarrassment, when I saw compassion instantly in Sir Henry's countenance; he flew to the poor lady, and in words, and by a manner it is impossible to do justice to, so *tenderly rallied* her, if I may use the expression, upon the lowness of her spirits, that she recovered herself

herself sufficiently to apologize for retiring, and bade us adieu with composure.—How preferable one such proof of genuine sensibility, Louisa, to all the fine sentiments ever uttered! The Earl walked hastily about the room, and uttered something intelligible only to himself; he appeared to recollect himself however, and addressing himself to me, “ Miss Pryer,” said he, “ I think I must request *your* good offices with Lady Charlotte, who is afflicted with a malady, that baffles all the skill of her physicians ;—without any apparent cause she indulges a melancholy, that is the more surprising from the former levity of her temper. The space of about two years has absolutely metamorphosed her from a Hoyden to a Melpomene; her sprightly wit would en-

liven the dullest circles, and the song and the dance alternately employed her.—Now she has neither eyes nor ears for any society; her countenance is constantly clouded with grief, and her pleasure appears the indulgence of sorrow.”—“ And can no cause be divined for this strange reverse, my Lord?” I ventured to ask. “ None,” replied the Earl; “ and if there is any, it is confined to her own bosom.” “ But,” continued he, “ your arrival, Miss Pryer, may effect what we have all in vain endeavoured to accomplish. There is a parity of years betwixt you and Lady Charlotte, and it may be, that if there is any cause, you may”—“ I, my Lord,—I,”—stammered out your foolish Emily,—“ I shall be very happy to be in the least instrumental
to

to the recovery of Lady Charlotte,—but surely my Lord!”—“ I perceive your embarrassment Child,” said he, consequentially; “ but make yourself easy; assure yourself of my indulgence.”—I only bowed, and he went on :—“ Lady Saville, and you, Sir Henry, I am persuaded, will afford your countenance to a ward of mine, (whose father indeed was my relative,) and I will be responsible for her gratitude.”—“ Pardon me, my Lord,” said Sir Henry smiling, “ but your responsibility is unnecessary, since, if by the countenance you solicit for Miss Pryer, you mean only the civilities, which are the common dues of polished society, surely no gratitude attaches to the receipt of a customary tax: and if you mean the respect that is *beyond*

civility, that, my Lord, can never be *bestowed*, but must be purchased by merit, and in that case begets no obligation."—"Excellent! Sir Henry," said the Earl, bowing very formally.

Lady Saville then expressed her wish, that we might be intimate very soon, and by our mutual endeavours effect the recovery of poor Lady Charlotte. After which the conversation continued indifferent, until we separated to retire, and I immediately flew to my *escrutoire*.—And now, my dear Louisa, what do you think of my new associates?—Though I have not yet seen all the inmates of the Castle. Lord Offwell, the heir to it, is, I understand, daily expected by his father the Earl, and with the utmost anxiety, as he has
been

been absent nearly three years from England, and the accounts received of him, as well as his own letters have inspired the Earl with the notion of his apostacy from the religion and laws of his country. Besides this young nobleman, I heard the names of several others mentioned as familiars, but I really believe I shall think of none this evening but poor Lady Charlotte—She must be very unhappy.—Sleep now steals upon my wearied eyes, and reminds me to conclude this, my first effort towards *their* pleasure, whom I delight to please, (the dear inhabitants of Ormond Parsonage,) and whom, I pray the watchful Genii of the good ever to protect.

L E T T E R II.

From the SAME to the SAME.

NOTWITHSTANDING the fatigue of yesterday, I have arisen I perceive very early, as the turret clock is now striking five. The family are not yet stirring; but the splendour of the rising sun, and the harmony of birds invite me to a stroll in the extensive park that surrounds this Castle, of which probably you, my Louisa, may expect a romantic description; but I shall not attempt the task, unless I discover any material variation from the similar sketches you have often contemplated, by far superior pencils.

So

So leaving the moat, the draw-bridge,
and the mouldering turrets to the
paintings of your own fruitful fancy,
I bid you a good morning.

Seven o' clock.

My dear Louisa, I have the strangest
adventure to relate, so strange, that
even yet I scarcely know if what I
have seen and heard be an airy vision,
or a strange reality.—I had walked
a considerable distance from the Castle,
taking the marks of former footsteps
as my guide, without meeting a single
human being, when, at length, a vene-
rable form slowly approached me; I
was struck with an uncommon awe at
his appearance, and felt a considerable
degree of embarrassment as to the man-

ner in which I should address *him*, for I perceived upon a nearer approach, that it was an old man, with hoary head, and venerable beard. He walked with a staff in his hand, and wore an old-fashioned suit of plain white cloth, white worsted hose, with small silver clasps in his shoes; he bent a little forward in his gait, and as he came near me, took off his hat, and bowing very respectfully, passed on.— I stopped, and scarcely knowing that I did so, turned round to gaze again upon this venerable object, and caught his eye, for he had done the same himself.—“ I humbly crave your pardon, sweet young lady,” said he, “ but I saw, or fancied that I saw, in your face some traces of a countenance I never shall forget, which made me guilty of
this

this rudeness."—"If any apology is requisite, good Sir," said I, "it is due to you, for *my* curiosity has no excuse."

"That voice, that voice too is her's, and that sweet condescension that it utters is so like herself;—just so did she always speak to me, and since her departure to a better world, my ears have never been so pleased until this moment.—If I might without offence," continued the old man, "enquire, who it is, that so resembles my beloved, lamented benefactress, if I might ask your name fair lady?"—"My name is Pryer; I am the daughter of the late Colonel Pryer, and now the ward of his friend, the Earl of Rraxall."—The change, which these words produced in the old man's countenance, Louisa, is
beyond

beyond the feeble powers of my pen to describe;—the mild benignity, that had almost kindled adoration in my breast, was now transformed to rage and fury, as if the very name of Pryer had summoned to his mind the recollection of the highest injuries, and I had been the victim of his full revenge; for, darting upon me a furious look, and striking the earth with the staff he held in his hand, he exclaimed,—“Thou! Thou, a Pryer!—Thou the descendant of Colonel Pryer!—Why then do you wear that deceiving countenance?—Why do you form your lips to such seducing gentleness of speech?—Descendant of a murderer!—Why then has not Heaven marked it in your features, or have created you with a transparent breast, through which to shew mankind
your

your heart?—Or when you came into this world, why did not nature stamp upon your forehead the name of him, you sprung from?”

I trembled with astonishment and horror; but was unable to utter a syllable. At the conclusion of his exclamation the old man clasped his hands together, and raising them to his forehead, was silent for a moment, and then advancing towards me, his fury was spent, and tears fell plentifully down his aged cheeks;—“ Pardon, pardon, lady,” said he, “ this weakness—this madness!—I am to blame.—Say that you forgive me.”—“ Your speech and manner, Sir, so much amaze me,” said I, “ that I am at a loss what to say to you.—You are a stranger, and I
am

am blamable in listening to your discourse; if you have any thing to communicate to me, I reside at the Castle, and I dare say that the Earl will"——
"The Earl!" interrupted he,— "the Earl, as you term him, I despise. 'Tis true, I walk about the grounds he holds, because I venerate the very trees that grow upon them; I come and gaze thus early upon yon antique Castle, because it brings to my remembrance the *truly noble* men, who have possessed it; but I come to these devotions at an hour, when there is little risque of meeting with the reptile, whom you call an Earl, whose sight I loath more than a viper."—— "I must not listen to this language, Sir, the Earl is my guardian."—— "He, your guardian!" exclaimed he, again interrupting
ting

ting me ; “ alas, poor innocent !—Yes, innocent will I deem thee, till I find thee otherwise—thy origin is not thy crime, for my poor sainted benefactress herself was sister to thy fire : hear me then fair semblance of that blessed saint—Strange as this meeting must appear to you, who know me not, if thou art indeed the virtuous one, thy countenance proclaims thee, this meeting shall prove thy salvation, and I will be thy guardian.—Go, but to preserve my friendship, keep this interview a secret from every individual at the Castle, or I am no longer your guardian.—Farewel.”

Thus saying, he walked away, leaving me in a state so like a trance, that it is difficult to persuade myself I am
not

not even yet a dreamer.—But no, no, my Louisa, this uncommon adventure is no delusion;—too strongly in my ears even now do the sounds vibrate, that proclaimed with confidence my departed fire a—*murder*—, I cannot write the horrid word.

What will be your conjectures I know not, but mine are dreadful. I shall dispatch this and my former letter immediately the family are stirring, that I may have the advice of my honoured benefactors how to conduct myself in this affair;—Whether I ought to run the hazard of meeting the strange man again?—Whether I should keep the interview a secret, or divulge it?—Pray let me have directions in these points immediately, as
until

until then I shall not mention this adventure to any individual.

Adieu! adieu! my dear, best friends.

L E T T E R III.

From the SAME to the SAME.

It was eight o' clock before my attendant, Mary, came into my room, when the poor girl expressed no small surprise at my appearance; for she came, as she said, to assist me to rise, and was beginning to make apologies, when I prevented her the pain, by requesting her to dispatch one of the servants with the little packet I had written to the post-office. Upon her return she acquainted me, that Lady Saville desired my company in her dressing-room. I immediately waited upon her ladyship, though not without
some

some apprehensions, that she would discover in my countenance the anxiety of mind, which my morning's adventure had created.—“ Miss Pryer,” said her ladyship, as I entered, “ I have a message to deliver to you from your guardian, and would have waited upon you in your own room, had I not intended myself the pleasure of detaining you to breakfast with me.”

The urn was brought, the servant retired, and her ladyship and myself were alone. She then acquainted me, that the Earl had received intelligence of his son's arrival at Dover, that he expected him this evening at the Castle, and on this occasion had requested her to take Lady Charlotte and myself to Saville Lodge, as he wished
to

to receive him alone.—“You see, Miss Pryer,” continued she, “you are to be my prisoner; however, I will do all in my power to render your prison agreeable.”

“Your Ladyship is very good,” said I, “and I will study to deserve your goodness.”

“Why that we shall discover in time,” replied she with a smile, “for as I never esteem slightly, I never hastily choose the objects of my esteem; our acquaintance is yet young, but I will hazard thus much upon appearances, that if you do not grow in my esteem, I shall experience a disappointment.

At

At this instant the door opened, and Sir Henry appeared.—“ I beg pardon,” said he, drawing back, “ I understood your Ladyship was alone.” —“ Enter, Sir, enter,” said Lady S. “ you are arrived rather apropos ;—I was just going to mention Lady Charlotte to Miss Pryer.—Have you seen her this morning ?” —“ I have, and it was with additional pain I perceived her increased dejection ;—indeed, indeed there must be a conclusion to this affair ; every day more strongly confirms my opinion, that this absurd compact is the source of her unhappy malady.

“ Take a chair,” said Lady S.—“ This young lady,” continued she, (alluding to me,) “ is now to be considered

to receive him alone.—“You see, Miss Pryer,” continued she, “you are to be my prisoner; however, I will do all in my power to render your prison agreeable.”

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“ Take a chair,” said Lady S.—“ This young lady,” continued she, (alluding to me,) “ is now to be considered

sidered a member of the Rraxall family; and it is necessary that she should be informed of that compact, to which you attribute, and probably with truth, the distressing indisposition of Lady C."

" Briefly then, Miss Pryer, (to me)
" Lady Charlotte and my son have long been designed for each other.— Three years since, my son quitted England on a tour through Europe, and left that young lady in excellent health, with an uncommon flow of spirits. Two years after his departure, that lamented event took place, which bereaved *me* of the best of husbands, and placed *him* in the possession of his father's titles and estates.—His return was hastened, and in compliance with that father's dying wishes and commands he lost

no

no time in formally soliciting the execution of that treaty, the preliminaries of which had been settled previous to his absence from England;—I mean his marriage with Lady Charlotte.—But the health of the young lady, which had been some time declining, upon the return of Sir Henry became more visibly impaired, and has since fallen a prey to that melancholy which you must have noticed last evening.—Yet in this state of health, in this state of mind, the Earl expects Sir Henry to propose, and his daughter to accept, an early day for their union.”

“ To you, Miss Pryer,” continued her ladyship, “ to whom, I understand, the manners of high life are little known, this sort of alliances must ap-

pear strange and absurd ; but—Such things are !—Yes !—in the very family, of which you are now a member, you behold two persons bound to each other, by the will of their fathers as firmly as the laws can bind them ; thus prohibited from following the dictates of choice or reason, and compelled to wear the fetters which prejudice has forged.”

Whilst Lady Saville was speaking, I could not help remarking the perplexity of Sir Henry.—He walked across the room—sat down—took up a book—laid it down again—and appeared extremely agitated.

At this part of her narrative Lady Saville was interrupted by the entrance
of

of a servant with a message from Lady Charlotte, requesting to know at what hour she had ordered the carriage?—

“Have you much preparation to make, Miss Pryer?” said Lady Saville to me.—“None, my Lady, my portable desk will contain the few things I shall take with me.”—“Then order the carriage at eleven,” said she, “and acquaint your Lady.”

In this little interval, Sir Henry had recovered his presence of mind; and when the servant was gone,—“Portable desk, Miss Pryer?” said he, “you are a scribbler, then?”—“I employ some hours in writing, Sir.”—“You correspond, I presume, with the family you have left,” said Lady Saville?—“At the particular
D 2 request

request of my former benefactors, my Lady, I have entered upon a correspondence, from which I promise myself pleasure and profit."

"You had resided a considerable time in Mr. Ashton's family, I think?" said Sir Henry.—"My whole life, Sir."—"Indeed!—the separation must have been felt then?" replied he.—"Deeply Sir," said I, half stifling a rebellious sigh.

"I reserve all my enquiries concerning your worthy people, Miss Pryer," said Lady Saville; "that we may not want subjects of conversation at Saville Lodge."—"Oh! my Lady, if you permit me to speak to you of my dear respected friends, their virtues and
their

their worth will furnish inexhaustible topics of discourse.”—“ Well, well, then we will soon draw upon your stock ; at present let me recal your attention for a moment longer to the case of poor Lady Charlotte.—Respecting your behaviour to her, let me recommend you to chearfulness in your private interviews ; and in company should the thread of the conversation appear to pain her, break it if you can.—At present, such is the uncertain state of affairs, that it is impossible to mark out any line of conduct, but the arrival of her brother may effect some change ; who, if report speaks true, is half a madman.—A warm advocate for the doctrine of equality in the person of a nobleman is rather a phænomenon !—but this is the age of wonders !

"In the mean time Sir Henry has a most painful task to perform.—He cannot without injury to his own feelings, and insult to Lady Charlotte, even hint to her the performance of the contract, and yet such is the jealousy of the Earl, that he cannot suffer his absence from the Castle, lest, in spite of the ties of law or honour, he should be induced to marry another."

"It is almost needless to add anything to what Lady Saville has said, Miss Pryer," said Sir Henry; "but I cannot help recommending this unhappy young lady to your particular attention.—I do not mean so far to impeach your humanity, as to suppose her case
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can obtain a more powerful pleader, than I am sure it finds in your bosom. I would only entreat you to a strenuous exertion of the influence, which your age, sex, and gentleness of manners must give you with the unhappy object of our anxiety.—That the seat of her disorder is her mind, I entertain not the least doubt.—Some secret sorrow preys upon her heart, and must in time destroy her, if measures far different from the threats of her father, are not quickly taken to discover and remove it.—Could tenderness *alone* have accomplished this, Lady Saville must have succeeded; but from the nature of circumstances, with which you are now acquainted, you will, I presume, Miss Pryer, con-

ceive my meaning, when I say, that Lady Charlotte may feel objections to revealing to *my nearest relative* the state of her heart, which she might feel courage to unfold to one less interested, and of equal sensibility."

This, Louisa, was what he *said*, but how can I make you conceive how much more he expressed by his manner, by his countenance!—It is impossible!—I will not attempt it.—I forget whether any, or what reply I made to him, but the conversation ended here, and we separated to dress. My fingers never performed that office more nimbly; and I have had the more time to depict, for your view, these new scenes.

My

My mind is now divided between compassion for Lady Charlotte, and anxiety, or curiosity, shall I call it, to know more of the strange old man!—When I reflect upon his words, all the hope with which I flatter myself is, that they may mean nothing; for, if they relate to any thing, it must be to some tale of horror, which, to know, will perhaps depress my mind as much with grief, as it is now agitated by anxiety.

I wait with impatience the arrival of a letter from the Parsonage, which I have requested may be forwarded to Saville Lodge immediately it reaches this place.

I now close this letter, as I expect every minute a summons to the carriage.—My next will be from the Lodge.

silence reigns around ; *here*, the views are pleasing and boundless ;—distant hills covered with flocks, and valleys laden with corn ;—while moving herds of cattle, and the loud laughter of the chearful peasantry give variety and joy to the surrounding meadows.

But let me check my rambling pen.—My present business is to relate the occurrences of our ride.—Lady Saville's coach conveyed us. Poor Lady Charlotte sat the silent emblem of grief, notwithstanding our united efforts to engage her in conversation. A monosyllable now and then fell from her lips in answer to questions from Sir Henry or Lady Saville ; but her more frequent responses were sighs. At times she would start, as if from

from the sudden breaking in of some unpleasant idea upon her mind, and then the tears would force their passage down her pallid cheeks. If any thing could have equalled the compassion I felt for this poor lady, it would have been my admiration of Sir Henry Saville's conduct. How can I describe it, my dear Louisa? Words cannot adequately express the tender sensibility that glistened in his eyes, while, at the same moment, with manly fortitude, he was evidently combating his own feelings to relieve those of Lady Charlotte.

The topics of our discourse were various, light and indifferent, until the carriage passed a neat white cottage, surrounded by a garden, in which, to
my

my astonishment, I perceived at work the very same old man, whom I met this morning in the park. Unable to restrain the emotion his unexpected appearance occasioned, I involuntarily exclaimed, "Bless me! there is the man!"—My manner, and the suddenness of the ejaculation, surprized them all, and even startled Lady Charlotte from her lethargy.—"I beg pardon," cried I, recollecting myself, "but the unexpected sight of that strange man"—"Have you seen old Marlow before, then?" said Sir Henry.—"If that is his name," said I, "I met him this morning in the park at Rraxall Castle, and he talked so strangely, that I concluded he was insane." Lady Saville and Sir Henry smiled.—"He is certainly a strange person," said the latter;

latter; "and there are many, who, like yourself, have been inclined to think him a lunatic; but I differ in my opinion with them."—"Possibly, Sir," said I, "you may have had opportunities of forming your opinion upon better authority than many others."—"I have conversed with him frequently," replied he; "I have passed many hours very profitably in his company, and am indebted to him for more useful knowledge than I ever gleaned from books."

Conceive, Louisa, how much my anxiety to know *more* was increased by what I *knew*. "Certainly, Marlow is no madman," said Lady Saville; but you will allow he is a very *mysterious* character, Sir?"—"To those

those who know him not, he is," replied Sir Henry: "in the village a variety of opinions about him exist—Some conclude he is mad; others reverence him as a prophet; and he is *literally* "a terror to evil-doers, and a *praise* to those who do good;" for, as he walks about the country, he contrives to learn every event that passes, and he is sure to bestow a liberal portion of censure or applause, where he conceives they belong. You must expect to receive *your* due, Miss Pryer; for he will certainly know all your transactions. Possibly you may meet him at the Lodge, for he frequently visits the library there."—"He is then, I presume," said I, "a man of learning." "Of very extensive learning," replied Sir Henry; "he studied many years
at

at Oxford." "He appears very aged," said I.—"He is nearly eighty years old:—about forty years ago he went to reside at Rraxall Castle in the capacity of chaplain to the present Earl's father, and held that situation till his patron's decease. When that event happened, old Marlow, (for so we call him,) was attending the heir of the family on a foreign tour; which unfortunate young nobleman, the elder brother of the present Earl, never returned to his native country. Impatient to reach England upon the first tidings of his father's death, he travelled day and night thro' France, and arrived at Calais on a dark and stormy night. The persuasions of the pilots there could not prevail upon him to delay the passage; and *his* liberal offers overcame *their* fears.

fears. He embarked, and the vessel left the harbour. In two hours after, it sunk, and, excepting the cabin-boy, all on board perished."—"Unfortunate precipitancy!" exclaimed I;—but pray where then was Marlow?" "Circumstances made it necessary that he should remain in the South of France, where the unfortunate Os-
well received the intelligence of the Earl's death, and to which place he intended to return as soon as possible. There old Marlow remained, till, impatient at a silence of which he knew not the cause, he came to England, and learned the unwelcome tidings I have related.—Meeting a very cold reception at the Castle, he applied to some relations in London, from whom he received a similar ungrateful treatment.

ment. These circumstances, it is supposed, have sowered, in some degree, a disposition naturally otherwise; and have led him to the singular mode of life, which he has adopted."

Here Sir Henry ended his narrative to pay some attention to Lady Charlotte, who sat a dumb auditor to his discourse, with her head reclined in a corner of the coach.

I perceive the party on the lawn are returning—so lay down my pen for the present:

The

The party I mentioned came into the parlour, joined by a young officer, whom Sir Henry introduced to me as Captain Anderson.—With a very bold air he addressed himself to me;—“What! the daughter of the late Colonel! the sister of my friend Charles Pryer!—What a charming fate!—I protest, Madam, I feel delighted to such a degree, I cannot express my joy!—I esteemed the Colonel,—and as to Charles,—really Charles and I were bosom friends; were n’t we, Sir Henry?”

“Really Captain,” said Sir Henry, smiling, “you have stumbled upon a wrong reference. Mr. Pryer had left Braxall Castle for the East-Indies before

fore I arrived in England.”—“ Oh ! blefs me, true, true !” cried the Captain, quite undaunted at this rebuff ; “ but Lady Charlotte, now I recollect, *you* knew more of Charles Pryer than any one.—He was a great favourite of your’s.”——Louisa, I never shall forget the behaviour of Lady Charlotte at this strange address.—She was leaning her head upon a sofa, *apparently* inattentive to every one ; but no sooner had the Captain uttered the last sentence, than she started from the sofa, and looking wildly round the room, her pale cheeks covered for a moment with a crimson blush,—and exclaimed—“ Where is he ?—Where is Charles Pryer ?” and then, as if instantly recollecting herself, she put her hand to her head, and walking swiftly

to the door, exclaimed "Fool! Fool!" and disappeared, followed by Lady Saville.—"What *the* devil have I done?" cried the Captain. "Upon my honour, Sir Henry, I beg pardon; I really did not mean to hurt any one's feelings, and I believe I have offended you all."—He might well think so, for Sir Henry, extremely agitated, walked to the window, and threw up the sash, to hide his disgust and his pity; whilst I went to another to conceal emotions it is impossible to describe, which this new mystery occasioned. The Captain, however, with uncommon assurance followed me.—"Pray, Miss," said he, "do have the goodness to explain this revolution? Sir Henry told us all, when he left Italy, that we should soon hear of
his

his marriage with Lady Charlotte:—of course, when I arrived, the first step I took was to fly down to Saville Lodge, and greet my new relative with an Epithalamium made upon the occasion:—but, upon my honour, I begin to think I must change my congratulations into condolence, and make a solemn dirge of my Epithalamium.”—

“ Captain Anderson, you are my relation;” interrupted Sir Henry, in a serious tone; “ and you will be ever welcome where I am master; but be not offended, if I observe, that there may be cases, in which even *Cousin Anderson’s* wit may be dispensed with.—

Who,” continued he, “ would not rather apply the balm of sympathy to a *wounded* mind, than pierce it with
the

the shaft of ridicule?—Look there! now I have done wrong again,” cried the Captain.—“ Why, who the deuce could have supposed, Cousin, that *your* mind was wounded, when we all know it was a match absolutely forced upon you by your father?”—“ You quite mistake me,” said Sir Henry;—“ I spoke of Lady Charlotte; you perceived her dejection, and you were wrong to address her in the way you did.”—“ Why, upon my honour, cried the Captain, “ I spoke the truth, I am sure she will confess it.”

Just at this moment Sir Henry was summoned to attend the Dowager;—and the Captain continued prating to me.—As I never interrupted him

him by question or observation, he kept talking on, apparently very much to his own diversion.

Among a number of his observations, one was, that he did not recollect seeing me before;—and added, that it was well for him he had not;—since he was sure he should have lost his heart the first interview, and begged to know where so much beauty had been so long buried.—“ But,” continued he, “ I recollect Charles told me, he had a sister who was under the care of a country vicar. You are very like your brother, and every body allowed *him* to be a remarkable fine young fellow.—Poor Charles! he was over head and ears in love—and Lady Charlotte returned his passion—but fate parted them.—Though

I really thought at one time they would have *tript*.”—I could refrain no longer.—“ Pray, Sir,” said I, “ What is *tript* ?” —“ Oh!—*been off*—that is, *elop’d*.” —“ I hope it was impossible! My brother could never have been so destitute of gratitude or honour.” —“ Upon my honour! he talk’d of it—and did not want spirit to put it in execution;—but, this East India appointment was put into Lord Rraxall’s hands, and Charles was off at few days notice for Bengal.—I hear he does very well there.—Pray, do you correspond?—I was about to reply in the negative, when Sir Henry re-entered the room, and requested me to attend his mother.—I found her ladyship in an adjoining parlour.—“ Miss Pryer,” said she, “ I have left poor Lady Charlotte

Charlotte in a very melancholy frame ; —she insists upon keeping her room to day.—When I found it was in vain to dissuade her from her purpose, I ventured to propose your sitting with her ; she hesitated at first, but after a pause of thought, she seemed to summon an unusual serenity into her countenance, expressed a very favourable opinion of you,—and has commissioned me to say, that if you will have the goodness to see her, she will endeavour to receive you chearfully.—I hope,” continued her Ladyship, “ that your amiable manners will gain her confidence, and when we know her malady, I am sure every body will unite in efforts to remove it.”—She then conducted me to the door of Lady Charlotte’s apartment, and there left me.

The interview that followed, my dear Louisa, is so interesting to your Emily, that I shall endeavour to describe it minutely; and, to give it you with a better effect, I shall put our conversation into the form of a dialogue.

When the servant, who attends her, opened the door, the unhappy lady was sitting on a sofa.—She arose at my entrance, and advanced to meet me with an air of confidence, so different to what I had expected from her former behaviour, that it really surprised me.—The servant withdrew,—we were seated,—and alone.

LADY C. This is very kind, very kind indeed, Miss Pryer!—I feel myself

self much obliged by this visit, but I can only repay you with my poor thanks.

EMILY. It is I, my dear Lady, who am obliged and honoured by this privilege, which Lady Saville has just communicated to me;—and allow me to say, that I will study to deserve the favourable opinion which procured it.

LADY C. It is very good in you to say so, but I am too conscious, that it is a sacrifice from humanity to misfortune, when a *disinterested* person seeks my sad company.

EMILY. But let me beg, Lady Charlotte, not to consider Emily Pryer as a *disinterested* person, since she has such

a troublesome heart, that it *will* interest itself in the the good or ill of all her fellow-creatures.—Can she then see the daughter of him, under whose protection Heaven has placed her;—*one*, whom she ought to regard as a sister;—can she behold that person, the victim of melancholy, a prey to sickness, and yet remain *disinterested*?—You wrong her, if you think she can.—(Here the poor lady cast a tender look of gratitude upon me, and sighed most melancholy.)—Come, come, my dear Lady, let me *convince* you what an interest I have in your recovery, by my strenuous efforts to accomplish it.

LADY C. Alas! you would undertake a vain task.—No means,—no medicine

dicine will e'er accomplish that.—
Thanks be to Heaven!—*that's im-*
possible.

EMILY. You must permit me to
smile, my dear Lady, at these effusions
of melancholy.—I cannot suffer you
to indulge in these gloomy ideas, tho'
you may find a mournful pleasure in
them.—Have you no music here?
(lively)—I perceive you have not.—
Well then, (taking a volume of poems
from my pocket,) you must give me
leave to read to you.

LADY C. No, no, no!—(shaking
her head, significantly.) These ma-
noeuvres are well conceived, Miss Pryer,
but avail nothing in my case.—I know

my friends suppose me *blamable* in yielding to a melancholy, occasioned, as they think, by the weakness of my nerves; and I would not have *them* think otherwise.—But, Miss Pryer! to you—to you——(Here the energy of mind, which the poor lady had evidently summoned for this interview, appeared to forsake her;—her voice faltered, and she wept.)

EMILY. If then, dear Lady, this melancholy is not to be *diverted*, if, unhappily, there is seated in your mind a *cause* of grief, permit me to change my plan,—and with the tenderest and most gentle hand, to probe the mental wound, and at least, to exhaust my skill in efforts to remove it.—(She raised her eyes from the floor, and
looking

look earnestly upon me, through streams of tears, was silent for a moment or two.)

LADY C. Yes!—You *are* worthy of my confidence, and I will trust you.—But why should I burthen your mind with the weight of my sorrows?—Why punish another when *I* alone am guilty?

EMILY. Guilty!—did I hear rightly?—did you charge yourself with guilt, dear Lady?

LADY C. O yes!—Yes!—great guilt!—yet do not despise me,—do not spurn me from you;—but let me hide my shame from all the world in disclosing it to you.—(Here her head

sunk upon my bosom ;—she threw her arms tenderly around my neck, and continued weeping some moments in that posture. She then raised her head, and continued.)—My crime has been severely punished by its own *Consequences* ;—it has deprived me of every joy *this* world can offer, and has not even left me the hope of a better.

EMILY. This is the tone of *despair*.—Do not, dearest Lady, listen to the voice of the worst foe of mortals.—I own that your confession has surprised and pained me, but whatever errors you have unhappily fallen into, let penitence provide a balm for your wounded mind, and prudence labour to ameliorate the consequence of evil.

LADY

LADY C. (starting up.) Good God!
—How like an an angel do you speak!
You almost induce me to believe that
Heaven has viewed the *ruin* of my
heart, and in it's mercy sent you to
my succour.

EMILY. O! cherish the flattering
idea.—Believe it so, and I will strive,
by every effort of my mind, and every
personal service in my power, to pro-
long the sweet delusion.

LADY C. (falling on her knees.)—
Here then, I vow to Heaven, that in
your bosom I will repose every secret
of my soul, be guided implicitly by
your counsels, and you shall be to me
a second conscience. (rising.)—Nor
be surpris'd, my good angel, at this

resolution;—it only *appears* sudden,—for from the moment I heard of your intended residence under my father's roof, I counted anxiously the hours till you came: and when you came, listened to the syllables you uttered, and watched your countenance to learn your disposition, on which depended all my earthly hopes.

EMILY. Every sentence that you utter, adds to my surprise —Of what nature, my dear Lady, must those hopes be, that made the disposition of a stranger their foundation?

LADY C. Oh! you little apprehend the shock that is preparing for your virtuous mind.

EMILY.

EMILY. Let me receive it.—Delay will only strengthen apprehension on my part, and tend to lessen your firmness in the relation.

LADY C. Oh!—Never could I relate before your face my shameful story!—No!—against that pain I have provided.—Stay but a moment!—
(She then walked briskly to the door, and turned the key. Then returning, she drew from her bosom a bundle of papers, tied with black ribband, and sealed with black wax, which she deposited in my hands, saying,—“ This packet will unfold to you my sad story; but place it for the present in your bosom, and at night, when you have retired

tired and locked your chamber-door, then spare an hour from sleep, to peruse a tale, in which you will find an interest that you do not dream of;—and to-morrow let me see you early, that I may learn,—if *then*, when you will have known the worst, you will look as kind upon me, and speak to me as tenderly as you do now.—If you do,—if you receive me to your arms, when you shall know what I am,—I shall spend the remainder of my days in more tranquillity than I have long experienced, and shall meet my end in peace.—But now be not offended that I request you to leave me. Your presence will afford me pleasure, when I shall be certain that you forgive and pity me; but till then it is painful to me.”

Perceiving

Perceiving the propriety of her request, I immediately retired with renewed expressions of sympathy and friendship.

Thus, my dear friends, concluded an interview, replete with new matter of surprise and anxiety.—Almost every hour since my arrival at the Castle, has produced some new mystery.—The first appearance of the grief-worn Lady Charlotte,—the strange expressions, and horrid charges of the old man in the Park,—the singular behaviour of Lady Charlotte at the mention of my brother's name, and the hints thrown out by the garrulous Captain :—these circumstances, added to the interesting interview I have just described, have prepared my mind for something in the
story

story which this packet contains, in which I feel myself to be already interested.

Conceive how anxiously I count the hours till night,—and yet I tremble at the thought of what these papers may unfold.—The first dinner-bell is ringing, and, as I have not the excuse of being with Lady Charlotte, however unwillingly, I must attend the summons.

Ten o'clock, Evening.

There were at the dinner table, Louisa, besides Lady Saville and Sir Henry, the talkative Captain, and a young gentleman, a student of Oxford University, who has the happiness of being

being under the patronage of Sir Henry. The conversation, to which I attended, as well to conceal, as to alleviate my anxiety, was an entertainment, which, in a fitter mood, I should indeed have relished.—The Captain's frivolous attempts at wit, and the young student's college pedantry were admirably contrasted by the just satire, and solid sense of Sir Henry.—Lady Saville too, discovered a noble mind; but Sir Henry—oh, Louisa! how strongly am I reminded of the portrait, which your good father has repeatedly drawn for our instruction, of a good and great man's character, by the conduct and sentiments of this inestimable young Nobleman!

When

When Lady Saville and myself withdrew from table, I reported such parts of the late interview with Lady Charlotte, as I deemed sufficient to convince her that I had gained her confidence, without mentioning the packet, which I cannot but consider as entrusted to my secrecy; if not by express words, at least by the manner of the poor lady.—In divulging it to the dear inhabitants of Ormond Parsonage I do no more than confide in *myself*; for it has long been my happiness to experience that each of *our* hearts is a common tenant of our common bosoms. Lady Saville was pleased at the success of my endeavours; and even intimated, that if Lady Charlotte should so far confide in me, as to acknowledge her resolution

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tion *never* to accept Sir Henry's hand, it would afford satisfaction to every one but the Earl of Rraxall.

I embraced this opportunity of requesting her Ladyship's permission to retire early in the evening for the purpose of writing to my friends.—And now, Louisa, the hour is arrived, at which I am permitted to break the seal of the packet.—It now lies before me!—It is large and contains —Why do I tremble thus?—Why feel such hesitation to open it?—I know not whence this dread can arise, and yet I feel the want of resolution to proceed.—Perhaps it arises from the *secrecy* of the transaction.—It must be so.—This is the first act of my life I
ever

ever did in studied privacy.—Has it not the semblance of guilt?—Am I quite justified in what I am about to do?—Oh! now it is, my honoured, my revered sire, my more than father, now it is, I feel the want of that council, which, until this reluctant absence from your roof, has ever been my guide.—But hold!—I think e'en now I hear my mentor whisper,—“Emily,” methinks he says to me, “I am here; proceed!—I read with you, word for word, the contents of these papers, and if they should require any thing you ought not to comply with, *I will speak louder.*”—Yes,—thus says CONSCIENCE, and *that*, with me, is but another name for *Mr. Ashton*.

Now

Now, my dear friends, the mystery is explained,—the fatal story is revealed, and your Emily indeed feels an interest in the events it has unfolded, too great for expression. The contents of the papers are long, and probably are not equally interesting in every part: but I shall transcribe the whole for your perusal, as they form a connected retrospect of the history of the Rraxalls, and are well calculated to assist you in forming your ideas of my guardian, and my present situation.

The whole appears to have been written in the true spirit of penitence, at one of those calm intervals, which even the most unhappy sometimes enjoy. I shall offer no further comments,

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ments, nor attempt to express the sensations, which these memoirs have created in the breast of one, whose feelings will be much better understood by her dear friends, than she can describe them.

The night is now far advanced.—I feel fatigued, and shall therefore defer my task till the morning.

Thursday Morning, Seven o'clock.

I now sit down, Louisa, to copy the Memoirs.—On the outside are these words—"Written on the night of the 19th of July."

COPY OF THE MEMOIRS.

AT length a moment of tranquillity is come!—I am resolved to snatch the fleeting opportunity to commit to writing, the cause of that sad change, which appears equally to surprise and to afflict my father, and all my friends; and I am strengthened in this resolution by a letter I have this day received from that father, which informs me of the death of Colonel Pryer; and adds, “*that his daughter, Emily, will reside with us during her minority, as I have accepted the charge of becoming her guardian,*”

I am

I am induced to hope, from the character of those worthy people with whom she has hitherto resided, that she may have received from them such principles of virtue, as, added to the natural tenderness of the female heart, may render her that indulgent friend, which a poor broken-hearted wretch has long solicited the Supreme Being to allot her. A very short acquaintance will confirm or blast this, my last, my only hope of earthly consolation.—Should Emily Pryer prove to be a female worthy of the name of friend, possessing sympathy for the afflicted, and compassion for the fallen, *then* will Emily Pryer shortly be the reader of these papers.—But, (which God forbid!) if she be nothing more than the mere semblance of a woman, devoid of sensibility, and
dead

dead to pity, *in that case*, they shall be deposited in my own bosom, till the heart that animates it, has ceased to throb, and nature, overcome by long and painful struggles, has yielded to its dissolution.—Then, when my last sigh is breathed, and my last tear shed, —*then* will a *father's* eye survey the record of a daughter's shame!—And when her life has paid the forfeit of her crime, it *may* be, that he, that father, whose eye, while living, she could not encounter, may receive this, her posthumous petition with a softened heart.

Whatever the event may be, feeling myself animated to the task, I devote this night to a faithful record of my own memoirs;—and Thou! fainted spirit of the best of mothers, hear my confession,

and behold the justice that I pay thy memory!

The earliest period of my life that I can review in the mirror of memory, is that at which my father became Earl of Rraxall, in consequence of the unhappy fate, that doomed his elder brother to an early and a watery grave. I was then nearly four years old, and was the chief delight and tender care of my mother. My father was partial to my brother, who was older than myself two years. I remember the extreme grief of my mother at this event, and the contrary effect it produced upon my father.

Were it possible, it would be my wish, my sincere desire to throw a veil
of

of silence over every deformity in the portraits I am about to draw of my parents; but unhappily, much as it pains me to express it, I must declare, that long reflection upon truths I have learned, and facts I have myself witnessed, has deeply convinced me, that the errors of my life, have sprung from the vices and prejudices of a father!

I have had the grief to learn that my parents were unhappy in their union, even prior to the advancement of my father, who had married, it is feared, rather from pecuniary motives than any other impulse; and when the event I have related, placed in his hands the accumulated wealth of an ancient family, he felt the balance of ad-

vantages preponderate in his favour, and, no longer regarding the censure of the world, discarded even the appearance of affection for his wife.

If Miss Pryer is my reader, I must apologize for bringing to *her* view in this part of my history one of those unhappy females, who having once strayed from the path virtue, never more regain it!—Such a one was the celebrated Mrs. Ellington, whose charms held my father a captive, and rendered my mother the most miserable of women.

Such was her influence at this epoch over my father, that desirous of placing her at the head of his table, he exerted every artful, every cruel method to drive from his roof the lawful sharer

sharer of his fortunes. But there were two irresistible attractions, which held her there in spite of the severest scorn, and bitterest reproach, and these were *her two children*. Over our infancy, had the best of mothers personally watched with a laudable anxiety, and in the pleasing hope of being permitted still to bestow her time in the just formation of our growing minds, she patiently submitted to ill treatment she had not merited, nor could avert; and retiring with her beloved charge to the Castle, left my father to the unmolested enjoyment of his guilty pleasures in town.

But as yet her sorrows were young, for blessed with the prattling society of her children, and intent on the im-

portant and delightful task she had undertaken, the loss of all other society scarcely caused a regret. But short was this serene period of her life: the arrival of my father at the Castle about six months afterwards, produced the climax of an injured wife's afflictions, and laid the basis of his daughter's guilt and shame.—He came not alone, the siren to whose guilty charms he yielded himself a slave, accompanied him, and became the Lady of the Mansion, in which my unhappy mother appeared as an intrusive guest, wholly disregarded by her husband,

The croud of visitors who followed him, were beings of that cast, who sacrifice integrity at the shrine of wealth, and are ever ready to adopt those principles,

ciples, and imitate those actions to which their interest points.

These flexible dependants upon *Greatness* readily copied the contempt of my father in their behaviour to Lady Rraxall, and vied with each other in their court to Mrs. Ellington! Nay, the very domestics caught their master's wish, and imitated the conduct of their superiors!

How will Emily Pryer weep over the frailty of her parent, (if these papers ever reach her view;) how will her heart disclaim *his* conduct, whom she must yet acknowledge for a father!—Yes!—in the person of her own brother, in Colonel Pryer! did the most injured of women meet one of her

worst foes !—The constant companion and bosom-friend of my father, he was amongst the most zealous of his partizans against the peace and happiness of his sister; who had no other relative to consult, no other friend to whom she could appeal against the infidelity and cruelty of her husband, except this brother, who openly espoused that husband's cause.

The influence of Mrs. Ellington over my father was now firmly established, and he became literally her slave. She was then in the meridian of life—beautiful and accomplished, and possessed, in an eminent degree, those arts so common among women of her description, having completed her experience behind the scenes of a theatre,
from

from which situation she was elevated to that she then filled.

In proportion as Mrs. Ellington gained the ascendancy in my father's breast, Lady Rraxall became more and more despised, till, at length, the very chance of meeting her was painful to him, and he determined that she should quit the Castle. The terms of separation were laid before her by her brother, to whom she listened with a faint-like resignation;—a sigh, her soft complaint!—her sole rebuke, a tear! But when, in the conclusion, he acquainted her, that her children were to remain with Mrs. Ellington, griefs, that till then *silently* had preyed upon her heart, burst forth into prophetic lamentations upon the fate of her children:—the an-

guish of her mind became too powerful to bear—and reason quitted her forever !

In this sad state of existence she remained but a short period, e'er the grave received her sorrows, and her liberated spirit fled to receive that sure reward of suffering virtue, which, for wise ends, is frequently denied it here !

* * * * *

Thus far, I have been, it may be said, the historian of my mother, not my own. True : yet what I have written I know is fact, because I have lived to witness *other* facts that corroborate too well what I have been told, to allow a single doubt of its veracity.

city.—And upon my mother's fate I build my tale.

Had I continued to have received a few years longer the lessons of virtue, which that mother would have taught me, and to have beheld in her its bright example, could it have been *possible*, that I should have trampled on its precepts, or have ever forfeited its consolations! But to deprive me of so excellent a parent at that tender age, when reason first began to dawn! to deprive your offspring of the judicious care of a pious mother, my father, was thy great error!

Launched at that early period into a sea of dissipation, exposed to all its dangers, where was the warning voice that should have waked my vigilance?

—Answer me, my father!—And if, when wrecked in course of time upon its treacherous coasts, I were to say, that the syren, to whom you pointed me as to a beacon, deluded and destroyed me,—should I speak truth, my father? Oh! call to your remembrance the change of scene that followed the departure of my mother! To calm retirement succeeded noisy dissipation, and the dazzling scenes of fashionable levities!—Well do I remember the metamorphosis even of the old Castle itself. The *Gothic chapel*, a noble monument of ancient piety, was converted into a *superb stable* for my father's stud; and the offices of a *chaplain* dispensed with for the lessons of a *pugillist*; for whose use the old *armory* was fitted up as a *boxing-school*: while the *spacious hall*, that had
so

so often ecchoed the grateful songs of happy peasantry in our forefathers hospitable days, became *a stage* for exhibiting *private theatricals*.—With these alterations in the old building the manners of its new inhabitants exactly corresponded.

Such, then, was the school in which my brother and myself imbibed our first principles, and from corresponding models formed our manners. By imperceptible degrees the remembrance of my mother wore away, and the good humour and kindness of Mrs. Ellington gained my young heart.—I began soon to consider the former to have been a rigid and severe governess, and thought the latter *Indulgence* itself. In this frame of mind I continued during

ring the most important period of my life, the pupil of Mrs. Ellington. My person became the grand object of my anxiety, and to dress it to advantage, my chief study.—I learned music, because I was told I had a sweet voice, and fine finger.—I yielded to the constraint of a dancing-master, because I was persuaded that it would give me a graceful air. And my ambition attained its height, when, at the age of sixteen, I was pronounced qualified to take a part in one of our *private theatricals*!—The most flattering applauses followed my performance, and I became enamoured of the stage; and my time, my thoughts, were entirely devoted to obtain a pre-eminence in the fashionable list of private actresses.

I now.

I now began to look round me with no small degree of consequence, and considered myself capable of creating a favourable impression wherever I chose. —Among the number of young men who constantly or occasionally resided with us at the Castle, or in town, there were but few whom I esteemed worthy of my regard; and of those few, only two are of sufficient consequence to be remembered. The first was a youth of obscure birth, and an orphan, who had received from the benevolence of an uncle a liberal education at a public school, and had been supported by him at the university, in the intention of becoming a member of the law.— This young man unhappily became acquainted with a nobleman, who introduced him to my father. He possessed

possessed a taste and talents for the stage, and became one of the chief performers in the representations at Rraxall Castle.—He was handsome in his person, and fluent in the expression of liberal sentiments; and I soon discovered that I had made an impression upon a heart of uncommon sensibility! He at length revealed to me, with tears, what I had long before known. I laughed at his passion, and ridiculed his folly.—Possessing an extreme sensibility, and at the same time devoid of true principle, this unhappy youth fell a victim to the passion he indulged.

We one evening performed “The School for Scandal,” in which he played the part of Joseph Surface, and I, that

that of Lady Teazle, when I noticed the uncommon agitation of his mind, and the wildness of his manner. After supper, he went to the stable, saddled himself a horse, and left the Castle unknown to every one. The next day we heard the dreadful tidings that he had received his death from his own hands! —Poor Frederick! accept this tear to thy remembrance!——

The other youth—Oh! now be firm my nerves!—forake me not my resolution!—Let me but record this tale, and then then I will resign me to my fate!

The other youth of whom I am to speak, was the son of Colonel Pryer, the brother of her, who, (I will hope,)
now

now reads these papers!—Need I then describe him! Is it necessary that I should say he was elegant in his person and manners; the man of fashion without affectation, and a man of the world without discovering it?—Such was Charles Pryer! His companionable qualities rendered him a favourite with my brother, and the services of his father established an interest for him with the Earl. His own sex esteemed him as a *fine young fellow*, and ours was proud of his attentions. Among the latter there was none he so much distinguished as myself; and I, in return for this gratification of my vanity, studied opportunities of pleasing him. In consequence we were frequently together.—We chose each other's parts in our theatrical amusements;—we were partners
in.

in every dance.—If I would take an airing, Charles Pryer must drive me; if I would walk, I must have his arm;—and, in short, as if by mutual consent, we sought occasions to distinguish each other. It is easy to foresee the consequence of such a preference to a heart like mine.—It felt it soon!—In his absence I was uneasy, yet knew not the cause, and if ever he paid a slight attention to another female in my presence, it excited sensations so new, and so painful, they gave me alarm.

I now found that I had become the victim of that passion which I had scorned in another, and it soon became visible to every one at the Castle, except my father, who, blind to my weakness,

weakness, or pretending to be so, about this period disclosed to me the long concerted plan, by which the house of Rraxall was to be allied to the coeval family of the Savilles.

By this arrangement I was to be married to the son of the then Sir Henry Saville, who was introduced to me in form previous to his leaving England on a three years tour.

Had there existed a doubt of my prepossession in favor of Charles Pryer, this interview would have confirmed it, for though I should have been puzzled to have named one single objection to the person and manners of Mr. Saville, yet there appeared to me ten thousand reasons why I could

could not love him!—We took a formal leave of each other, and some papers were signed by both our fathers, which I was informed bound them in a large penalty to the performance of a contract of marriage betwixt their children!—Foolish prejudice!—Fatal folly!—Our destination for each other was now the universal topic of discourse at the Castle.—Hitherto Charles Pryer had never suggested in my presence a hint of his attachment to me, and sometimes my vanity permitted me to doubt my power over him.—One eventful interview, however, soon placed the matter beyond the reach of doubt.—I had proposed a ride as usual in the phæton;—he accepted it.—The conversation was dull, he appeared more thoughtful than I had ever seen him

him, and his gloom communicated itself to me. We returned to the Castle, having scarcely exchanged ten words. As he gave me his hand to alight from the carriage,—“ Lady Charlotte,” said he, “ I must speak with you.—I have something of importance to impart!—where can I see you alone?”—I am going to the library,” said I coolly.—“ Wait there ten minutes then, I’ll come to you.” He came, and finding me alone, locked the door.—“ Lady Charlotte,” said he, taking a chair near me, “ the important affair I have to communicate to you, is so *very* important, that upon the event of this interview, depends the question of life or death.—I admire—I love you, Lady Charlotte.—Pardon, if you can, the presumption

tion of this abrupt avowal;—if not, punish it immediately with your scorn.—Tell me you despise me, and you will pronounce a sentence which these hands shall cheerfully perform.” —“ Good God !” exclaimed I, “ What mean you ?” —“ I mean,” cried he, “ that you are my fate, and that my life lies at your disposal. Accept, then,” continued he, throwing himself at my feet, “ accept the ardent love you have inspired, and bless me with a warm return. Speak !—my fate hangs upon your lips.” —“ What can I say to you !” faintly uttered I, “ under the influence of feelings I dare not avow. It is in vain to say I scorn you, or despise your suit ; the state of my heart cannot have been so long unknown to its master.” —He seized my hand

hand, and pressed it with an enthusiastic ardour I never shall forget; and, rising, embraced me with a tender warmth, that surely would have wrung confession from a heart less sensitive than mine, or less exposed to all the dangers of a warm imagination, and a mind filled with the most romantic notions.—Such at least was the fact.—I fondly dreamed of never-ending joys, and listened with credulity to vows of everlasting faith, breathed my whole soul into his bosom, and sealed my future doom.

That we were destined for each other was now no more a question.—Our thoughts were now employed how to accomplish our mutual wish, and in the meanwhile to conceal our loves from

from the keen and jealous eye of my father, who, from the period of his declaration in favour of Mr. Saville, became more vigilant of my conduct than he had been before. The hope of *his consent* was never entertained by either, and the concealment that was necessary, while it excited my suspicion of every one else, increased my confidence in him.

At this crisis of affairs, Colonel Pryer was ordered to join his regiment, and shortly after left England for Jamaica. My father about the same time accompanied my brother as far as Dover on his intended tour to the continent, and Charles Pryer and myself were left at Rraxall Castle under the care of Mrs. Ellington, whom, by some means, he had gained over

to his interest, and whom he used in this opportunity as an excellent assistant in his schemes. Whenever I had hinted a private marriage he was always ready furnished with a thousand insurmountable obstacles, and never lost those opportunities of ridiculing the rites and obligations of matrimony, as merely the shackles which priest-craft had introduced into society; and, gilding his sophistry with that eloquence of which he was master, the fallacy of his arguments at the same time always obscured by the passion I cherished in my bosom, he at length gained my consent to become his *without the form of* matrimony, upon the single condition that Mrs. Ellington should sanction our connection, and promise her assistance in concealing it's expected consequences from
my

my father. Accordingly, during the absence of the other parts of the family from the Castle was deemed a proper period to learn the bias of Mrs. Ellington's disposition on this subject; and from the promptness of her acquiescence, I have since been induced to believe, that it was not the first time the subject had been laid before her.—Not one obstacle did she raise to this scheme, founded on folly, and sanctioned only by passion;—but on the contrary, produced the example of my own parents and herself to prove the unhappy consequence of marriages, and the *happiness* that resulted from what she termed “unshackled love.” And when I hinted the contract betwixt my father and Sir Henry

Saville, it excited no other reply than a laugh of ridicule.

Thus, encouraged by her whom I regarded as a mother, on the one hand, and pressed by the importunities of the man I loved to excess on the other, my passion blinded me from seeing the vice of the former, or discovering the wiles of the latter, and *that fatal night I yielded myself a slave!*—Oh! that the transactions of that night could be for ever buried in oblivion! Happy had it been if the sun had never rose again upon my guilty head!—But, ah no!—as it was the *consummation* of guilt, so it was the *foundation* of misery; of misery that has embittered the remainder of life, and
deprived

deprived me of the consolation which the innocent feel in the prospect of death!—Oh thou deceiver, *is this the happiness that results from unbackled love!*—But let me be calm, at least till the end of my tale, and then————

Feeling my mind too much agitated by the recollection of that sad night, and its important *Consequences*, I laid down my pen. I now once more resume it with composure. But I perceive by looking at my papers, I have been too prolix in my narrative: let me then sum up the whole, and the purpose of my writing it with brevity. Oh, Miss Pryer! (for I will indulge the fancy that I am addressing you,) you need scarcely to be *told* the sequel

of this tale, it is so *common*;—such as a sneering world would laugh at, and exclaim, “*What else could you expect?*”

After a week's absence, my father, who had visited some estates on his return home, arrived at the Castle.—Conscious of guilt, I dreaded to encounter his looks. He received me with affection, which added to my shame, from a sense that I had forfeited my claim to it. These checks of conscience were the embers of that sense of virtue my dear mother had kindled in my infant breast, which my father's concubine had since nearly stifled, and which now faintly glowed within me; but were soon again deadened by returning scenes of dissipation.

At

At length arrived that moment, which would have imparted the highest joy a *wife* could feel, but which to me was an awful memento of my crime!—I felt myself pregnant.—I communicated my situation to him, who was the father of my future offspring, *though not my husband*. He received the intelligence with apparent pleasure, but a few days afterwards discovered symptoms of so contrary a nature as alarmed me extremely for the cause. My father had long promised him his interest with the Directors of East India affairs, and my heart foreboded a separation.—I was right in my conjecture.—A situation had been offered to my father's disposal, in the province of Bengal, which held out the most lucrative advantages;

and this situation my father bestowed on him. His immediate departure was necessary to attend the Directors at the India-House, and a few days was the extent of his continuance in England!—What was to be done!—He had accepted the offer.—I resolutely determined to accompany him, and failing in his endeavours to dissuade me from my firm resolve, he at length apparently consented.—I left to his management the providing every necessary for the voyage; and to cover our design, I was not to leave the Castle till after he had embarked and sailed from the port of London, but was to join him at ———

Such was the arrangement of our plan at his departure; and I only waited

waited the arrival of his letter as a signal to quit my father's roof; and entrust myself to the protection of him whom I considered as my husband. His letter came.—It now lies before me, and I copy it *verbatim*.

“ EVER DEAR CHARLOTTE,

“ OUR separation is inevitable; and e'er you will receive this letter, I shall be many leagues from England.—To have consented to your encountering the fatigues and dangers of a voyage to India in *your present situation* would have been a proof of my barbarity, and not my love, which will remain for ever yours, and yours alone, in defiance of the fate that divides us.—Remember your situation, and bear

it with the fortitude it demands.—
Mrs. Ellington is your sure friend ; she
is bound to bear you through your
approaching difficulty, and preserve
its issue from your father's knowledge.
If, at any future period, our former
connection should prove a bar to your
happiness, have the heroism to forget
one, who will nevertheless, with unal-
tered affection, reflect upon you."

C. P.

The only remark I shall make upon
this letter is, that it roused my pride
almost as much as it increased my sor-
rows—and I sunk into a sullen gloom,
which has ever since been my compa-
nion!—I had not reached that extre-
mity of guilt to dare to lift my hand
against my *own* life, and *that* I bare
within me, for which, my pious mo-
ther,

ther, I bow once more to thee ! Yet often was I tempted to the horrid act ! And had it not been for the seeds of infant education, which all the dissipation of my growing years could not entirely eradicate, doubtless, the worst of crimes would long e'er now have terminated my existence.—Having no other confidant than Mrs. Ellington, to her I presented this letter, and received from her the renewed assurances of her protection ! To have upbraided her at this moment as an accomplice of him whom I now esteemed a most designing villain, would have been obeying the dictates of my heart :—but, under the dreadful circumstances which I had brought upon myself, happily I possessed sufficient prudence to conceal, in some degree, my real sentiments.

ments. Every day now opened some fresh source of sorrow and repentance; and that hour drew near, whose *sorrows* mingle themselves even with the *joyful* expectations of a *virtuous* and *wedded* mother! How then could a wretch like me reflect on its approach! The *wedded* mother may endure the pangs of nature, with a smile, cheered by the fond *hope* of giving being to her future offspring; and deems the danger and the *fear* of death o'erpaid by the embraces of a living infant. But, *she* whom the unlawful indulgence of a guilty passion conducts to the same trying hour, and there is left a poor abandoned wretch to all the *Consequences* of her guilt and shame, what is the *hope* *she* cherishes, and what the fate *she* dreads? She deprecates the birth of one
whose

whose helpless innocence would reproach her guilt, and add the weight of its unmerited affliction to her load of shame, whilst all the hope on which she rests—is *death*; and even that sad hope embittered by “*the dread of something after death.*”—Reflections of this nature were now my mind’s sad guests. By degrees my spirits failed me, my health visibly declined, and I was at length confined to my chamber.—My father expressed the most anxious wishes for my recovery; and, ignorant of the nature of my complaint, would have called in the aid of the physicians; but the intrigue of Mrs. Ellington prevented that, and every other mean of a discovery; and I was safely delivered of a son, who was immediately conveyed from his wretched mother
by

by the person who had assisted at his birth, and who had attended me in the capacity of a nurse. This good woman conveyed him to a Mrs. Adderley, who had been hired to supply to the poor innocent a mother's place—to fulfil those tender offices of love, which my own heart panted to perform!—But such were the circumstances of thy birth, unhappy boy! that she, who gave thee being, dared not to afford thee nourishment, but was compelled by shame to turn thee over to a hireling's care!—But again I wander from my story!

After this memorable event, when my poor child was settled with Mrs. Adderly, and I had in some degree recovered my former health, it was but
a short

a short period e'er a catastrophe took place at Rraxall Castle, which was followed by the most remarkable *Consequences*.

Mrs. Ellington, to whom alone, besides the nurse, (who, hired from London for the purpose, had returned thither again,) the story of my shame was known, died suddenly. For several days after her decease my father yielded to the most unmanly tokens of despair, and would listen to no consolation. After the funeral, his grief became less violent, and (the visitors at the Castle having left him) he indulged a gloomy solitude. His manners became quite altered. He would spend a very great part of every day alone, and in the evenings, when I was permitted

mitted to be in his presence, his conversation took the most serious turn, and he always assumed a cold and formal manner. Nor was this *sudden* change, as is frequently the case, merely *temporary*, but every succeeding day confirmed it.

I gathered from the short dialogues we held together, that this change was the result of a deep reflection on his former conduct, the *folly*, if not the *vice* of which he appeared thoroughly convinced of.—Feeling acutely the disappointment of his mind in the pursuits it had hitherto followed he now bent its course after far different objects: and flying from one extreme to another, most anxiously endeavoured to obliterate every trace of his former levity of conduct. With
this

this view he discarded the companions of his *fashionable follies*, and assumed the sullen forbidding dignity of a feudal baron in *the days of yore* ; whilst every thing at the Castle, as nearly as possible, resumed its antique appearance.—The moat that had been filled up, once more flowed round its walls, and the draw-bridge that had been removed again took its station. Every reflection upon his former conduct now appeared painful ; and as Mrs. Ellington had left no children to renew her memory, her name was forbidden to be mentioned. Nor was the remembrance of my dear mother herself less painful to him ; and more than once have I heard him curse the alliance, as a stain on that pedigree he now seemed to value more highly than his estates. Under the influence of these
sentiments

sentiments there was but one act of his past life, he one evening told me, that he could look back upon with pleasure, and *that was—the marriage he had planned betwixt Sir Henry Saville's son and myself!*

The anguish of the moment when this declaration pierced my ears, I am unable to describe.—I started, trembled, and turned pale!—My father's jealousy was roused,—“How!” exclaimed he,—“whence spring these emotions?—If I could suppose that they betrayed a repugnance to fulfil the solemn engagement that is now the chief solace and first hope of my heart, I should not hesitate to spurn you from me as a parricide; for you cannot take a surer method to destroy
your

your father !"—I wept, but could not answer.—His anger was increased, he struck the floor with his feet, and made use of the most harsh expressions.—I fainted, and recovered not my senses till I found myself in my own room, attended by the servants and my father. He was softened, and dismissing the attendants, apologized for his conduct, confessed he was to blame in charging me so rashly with so foul a crime, and that his zeal for the honour of his name and family had hurried him too far !—Somewhat encouraged by his softened manner I ventured to reply to him, attributed my sudden indisposition to the remains of my former complaint, and conjured him to believe that *I would never*
marry

marry any other person, than the man he designed for my husband.

He embraced me affectionately, and retired.—Yet still I too clearly perceived in his future conduct the seeds of that jealousy which this scene had sown in his bosom. He became fretfully anxious for the return of Sir Henry's son, and cultivated more industriously than ever our intimacy with the Savilles. Accordingly, we spent alternately a week at Saville Lodge and Rraxall Castle, by which means the families were constantly together till the event of Sir Henry's death, and the consequent recal of his son to England.

The

The dying request, or rather command of the Baronet was, that no obstacle whatever on the part of his son, should retard that union, which to have seen consummated, was the chief source of his desire to live.

At this time my father's mind laboured under perplexities of various natures.—He beheld two obstacles to the prosecution of his favourite and long planned scheme, of uniting the houses of Rraxall and Saville, in my declining state of health, and the decease of his dear friend!—At the same moment as it were, his attention was painfully turned towards a prospect still more threatening to his peace of mind. My brother, who had been more than two years absent from England,

land, had been most shamefully negligent in his correspondence. His letters were written at very distant periods, were wanting in filial respect, and seldom contained a sentence but what related to pecuniary concerns!—Remonstrance and entreaty equally failed in producing any alteration.

Some time since, the visit of an emigrant French Noble explained this conduct of my brother in a manner that has almost driven to distraction my unhappy parent. From the report of this nobleman he learned that his only son, the heir to his estates, the future head of the illustrious house of Rraxall, (through whom he hoped would be delivered to a late posterity, with

with added dignity, that pedigree he now so highly valued,) was become a professor of those Gallic principles, whose chief aim is the levelling all distinctions of birth. Unwilling to believe *that true*, which he so earnestly wished to be a false report, he wrote immediately his letter of recal, and at this moment anxiously awaits the event of his arrival.

A third source of perplexity to my *father* was to *me* the dawning of hope.— I allude to the event that placed Miss Pryer and her affairs under his guardianship, and which at this critical period took place. Previous to the intelligence I received of her intended residence at the Castle, how wretched, how dreadful
was

was the state of my mind!—At one instant resolving upon the desperate plan of suicide to defeat an adulterous union; and at the next recalled to life by the impulse of nature, that pointed out to me in all its horrors the deplorable fate of my deserted babe!—Should I avow my guilt, and throw myself upon the mercy of my father?—I shuddered at the bare idea of his vengeance!—Should I quit his roof, and fly with my poor babe to some distant corner of obscurity?—Alas! I had no friend who would receive a needy fugitive!—What then must I do?—Marry and conceal my guilt?—Detestable suggestion!—O cursed faithless monster! author of my miseries, couldst thou have viewed the ruin thou hast wrought, and hadst possessed one particle of that
humanity

humanity, which glows even in a savage breast, thou must have felt contrition!

Pardon me, Miss Pryer, revolting passion overcame my reason.—I will recollect that I am writing to a sister!—Receive then, Madam, this appeal to your humanity, to your justice.—You know my fatal story.—I was once above your pity, but *your brother* has reduced me I fear much beneath it; for if you refuse me your advice, your aid, I am a wretch consigned to speedy infamy.—Yet even on that sad supposition I could lean with fortitude, if you but grant me the consolation of knowing, that when I am dead, my poor boy, *your brother's* boy, shall not lack bread!—That you will shelter him from the

ills of life,—and that above all, you will frame his mind to virtue; teach him to forgive his father, and to view in that story, which the finger of scorn will engrave on the tomb of his mother, the *Consequence of vice*!—Here I pause.—The sequel of my tale time will develope. If I find in Miss Pryer the friend and confidant I have asked of Heaven, it is my desire, that after she has perused these papers she will destroy them.—But if the hope I cherish shall deceive me, and the first eye that views this tale should be a father's, may Heaven in mercy to my innocent orphan soften that father's heart, and cause him to extend to my poor child that protection, for which his helpless years so powerfully plead!—Hear me then, oh my father!—listen
to

to the petition thy ruined daughter
sends thee from the grave, and have
mercy on my child!

* * * * *

Thus, my dear friends, concludes
this melancholy tale!

On a separate slip of paper is this
memorandum, dated some time prior
to the other papers.

" I passed the door of Mrs. Adder-
" ley to-day, and saw my child; he
" looked well in health, but was mean-
" ly clad.—I dared not trust myself
" to speak to him, but asked some
" questions of Mrs. Adderley, who
" appears quite ignorant of the birth

“ of her charge, supposing both his
“ parents dead.”

What now remains for Emily Pryer to perform?—What council can she offer?—What aid can she afford to this much injured and unhappy lady?—Were there no other motives, humanity alone would prompt my heart to exercise the utmost of my power in her service.—But when I reflect, that the base assassin who has destroyed her honour and her peace of mind for ever, is my brother, how my zeal animates me, as much as possible, to remedy the wrongs that brother has committed. What sacrifice is there I would not willingly comply with, to restore
to

to peace the victim of his villainous designs?—But alas!—where are the means that are necessary to second this ardent wish, and render it effective?—Heaven, who views the purpose of my mind, will doubtless bestow the power to execute it. At least I will exert the best means I have, and trust to Heaven for the rest.—As for thee, thou base betrayer, who *wast* my brother!—but let me hold!—I forget!—What might not *I* have been if I had spent the early period of my life in the same school of dissipation as my brother!—No! it is not my task to *censure* thy crimes, but to endeavour to ameliorate *their fatal Consequences*.

I hear the family are stirring; I will fly immediately to Lady Charlotte,
H 3 and

and renew my assurances of affection and service.—I will seek out the unfortunate offspring of my brother, who shall be the dearer to me for his hereditary misfortunes. As my packet is so large, and its contents so important, I will now close it, and immediately dispatch it to Ormond Parsonage without *further* comment.

LETTER V.

From the SAME to the SAME.

THE interview with Lady Charlotte, my dear friends, has ended much to my satisfaction. I do not detail it, as I have a variety of other circumstances that claim attention. Suffice it to say, that I left her more tranquil than I have yet beheld her. I cannot repeat the extravagant expressions of her gratitude, as she termed it, which were far, very far beyond what the discharge of a just debt merited. I could not prevent her falling on her knees, and kissing with fervour my hands, bathing them at the same
H 4 time

time with her tears. She obtained my promise to preserve inviolate the sad secret from every one at the Castle; and directed me to the house of Mrs. Adderley, who has the charge of the child, saying, that the chief wish of her heart was accomplished in having obtained a friend for her boy; that she was sensible she should not have long to contend with her father in evading the marriage, and that she should now die in peace.—I breakfasted with her, and then left her at her own request.

I went next in search of Lady Saville, and found her with Sir Henry in the library.—“ Well, Miss Pryer,” said they together, “ how is your patient this morning?”—“ I have the pleasure

pleasure to say, that I conceive Lady Charlotte much better ; she appears less under the dominion of melancholy.”—

“ Bravo ! bravo !” cried the talkative Captain, who entered the library as I was speaking ; “ I knew it, I knew it,” continued he :—“ Yes, yes, there are certain disorders, which being purely mental, are only to be relieved by sympathy,—a kind of mental magnetism as it were ;—thus for example, two young ladies shall be love-sick, and ——” “ I *must* interrupt you, Captain Anderson,” said Sir Henry, “ though we lose one of your *good things* by the interruption ; but I would only acquaint you that *our* conversation is of a *serious* nature, and as I know *that* is not much in your way ; if Miss Pryer will do me the honour to let me

conduct her to my study, Lady Saville will thank you to be as *entertaining* as you can be."

" I humbly thank you, good Sir Henry Saville," said the Captain, in an ironical tone, accompanied by a low bow.—Sir Henry smiled, nodded to the Dowager, and taking my hand conducted me to his study.

" Captain Anderson," said he, as we were crossing the hall to an opposite flight of stairs, that leads to the study, " Captain Anderson is one of those characters with whom one can never be serious. I think he has good nature, but his continual aim is to be witty; —the most weighty concerns are levities to him, and as he bestows no
attention

attention upon his own affairs, we can't wonder at the indifference with which he treats another's.

I was too much agitated to reply. The idea of being closeted with such a person as Sir Henry, was an alarm to my fears.—I know not why, but I could not help secretly wishing I could with propriety have run away from him at the moment.—I felt a kind of reverence for the virtues and abilities of which he had given such proofs in the short period of our acquaintance, that I conceived myself so much his inferior, as rendered the idea of a private conference with such a man absolutely painful. He stopped at a door at one extremity of a long picture gallery of which he himself keeps the key.—“ Here, Miss Pryer,” said he,

“ we have the privilege of conversing *seriously* upon a *serious* subject.—I offer no apology,” continued he, placing a chair, “ for this liberty, as I am sure you have sufficient sense to discern it’s purpose, and sufficient sensibility to feel its necessity. I have this morning received a letter from the Earl of Rraxall, in which he says, “ the worst of his apprehensions respecting his son are confirmed by his own confession of sentiments *wildly democratic.*” (I use his own words.) He proceeds to request our immediate return to the Castle, and concludes his letter in the following words :”

“ All the hopes of happiness that are now left me result from the approaching

proaching honour of an alliance with Sir Henry Saville, and I flatter myself that he will no longer oppose the indisposition of Lady Charlotte as a bar to the immediate consummation of their nuptials, but that he will join his suit to my authority in a matter of so much importance to my peace of mind."

"Does not this letter," continued Sir Henry, "sufficiently apologize for this abrupt application to Miss Pryer, respecting the nature of that confidence, which I learn she has so quickly won from Lady Charlotte. When I recommended the sorrowful indisposition of that lady to your attention, Madam, I did so in the persuasion, that your amiable disposition and manners

ners could not fail to attract her confidence. Yet let me warn you not to imagine that mere self-purposes prompted that recommendation ; for though I candidly acknowledge that I consider myself interested in that confidence you have gained, I by no means desire to know more than you may conceive yourself at liberty to divulge, without a breach of promise, and without the least prejudice to Lady Charlotte. You know the situation in which, by the unhappy prejudices of a father, I am placed.—I am bound to *solicit* the honour of Lady Charlotte's hand, and alas ! I am too sensible that the power of a refusal is taken from her. Bound to do this by the sacred obligation I am under to a deceased parent, more powerfully than by the ties of law ;

law; there is nothing, however painful to my *own feelings*, that can prevent my performing that obligation; but when I witness the distressing state into which Lady Charlotte has gradually sunk since the declaration of her father on this subject, there arises an impediment of the most serious tendency, in the idea that very naturally presents itself of *her* reluctance to accept the choice of her father; the probable Consequence of her attachment to another!—That such may be the case is at least possible, and upon that supposition alone I conceive I am justified in seeking that information from you, Miss Pryer, which you only can afford me. Should you, Madam, confirm the supposition, be assured that the only use I should make of my
knowledge

knowledge would be to break the contract myself, and thus spare the unhappy lady the painful alternative of losing a father, or sacrificing her hand where her heart can never accompany it."——Generous, noble-minded man!—Yes, my dear friends, you, I think, will echo this ejaculation. Or if you do *not*, it is because I am unable to transcribe those expressions that are conveyed through the eyes more powerfully than by the tongue of this incomparable man!—His very actions speak,—thus when he had finished this last sentence, perceiving doubtless my foolish embarrassment, this was his method of relieving it.—“ I perceive,” said he, “ that I have said enough.—This afternoon we return to the Castle, and I shall

shall flatter myself with the hope of another interview with you to-morrow morning, by which time you may have determined how far *I* deserve, and *you* are at liberty to bestow the confidence I solicit."

I was about to reply.—" No answer now, Madam, I cannot suffer it;—it would be taking you by surprise ;"—and then changing the discourse in a moment, took up a book that lay near him on a table—" I presume you read the French authors, Miss Pryer ?"—I bowed assent.—" Here is a small collection," said he, rising from his chair, " which is entirely at your service; they are select, and I offer them, as I know there is nothing of the kind at Rraxall Castle."

I turned

I turned round to thank him, and was astonished at the taste and convenience united in this little temple of retirement ; globes, maps, orreries and a variety of philosophical and mathematical instruments were placed in different parts of the study. I could not refrain from expressing my admiration of the whole.—“ I have the pleasure of reflecting upon a number of very happy hours of instruction and amusement spent here,” said Sir Henry ; “ it was my father’s present to me at a very early age, and it was my great pride to fit it up as you see it.”—Louisa, does not this remind you of *our* former toil in the same employment at the little summer-house in the orchard !—How early does the mind disclose its
genius

genius and inclinations by its puerile pursuits!

Repassing the picture gallery, Sir Henry took the pains to explain to me the different subjects of the painters, which are all from the mythology of the heathens, sacred or profane history; and not as at Rraxall Castle the unmeaning portraits of men, no otherwise illustrious than as his Lordship's ancestors.

In the hall we were met by Lady Saville, whom I joined.—Sir Henry left us. We went to acquaint Lady Charlotte, that we were to leave the Lodge immediately after dinner, a piece of information I could perceive by no means pleasing to her.—We
chatted

chatted however, upon indifferent subjects for about an hour, when I had the pleasure of receiving your answer to my first packet. I flew to my room, broke the seal, and shed not a few tears of joy over the kind, very kind epistle. The advice of my venerable monitor shall be obeyed.—I will encounter the strange old Marlow whenever I have the opportunity. I rejoice to hear that you all receive so much pleasure from my letters.—This is indeed an encouragement to perseverance ; but alas ! the packet containing poor Lady Charlotte's Memoirs must, I am sure from my own feelings, excite sensations of no pleasing cast ; yet as a faithful narrator I must not fly from any part of my duty, but present the lights and shades, the cheerful

ful and gloomy parts of my history with equal truth.

I have perused the former part of this letter again, and I am apprehensive that you will think I speak too frequently and too warmly of Sir Henry Saville ; but as I am determined to write from the impulse of the moment, so also I am determined that no cold after-thought shall ever induce me to alter the warm dictates of my heart !—Nor can my dear friends blame their Emily, if her heart discovers, *only to them*, the admiration they themselves have taught it to feel for virtue, *wherever* it meets it. In the humble Morland, whose duties are confined to the sphere of your Parish Clerk, do we not all admire virtue !—And I am sure,
if

if you could witness the more enlarged walk of Sir Henry Saville, the same virtue displayed in larger and more brilliant characters would meet your warmer admiration.

Lady Saville has this instant tapped at my door, and very kindly proposed to shew me the charming grounds of Saville Lodge before dinner, as we leave it immediately afterwards, and may not return again for some time.

Nature and art have done each so much for the charming spot I have just left, that I know not to which it is most indebted for its beauties ; but

as

as neither, without the other's aid could have produced such delightful scenery, let them continue to contest the palm, whilst I once more introduce to you the singular old Marlow.

At the end of a retired walk in the shrubbery, we saw the old man, seated on a garden chair, a book in his hand, his staff laid at the foot of an evergreen.—Perceiving us pass, at some little distance, he arose and bowed.—“Yonder is old Marlow,” said Lady S——, “shall we meet or avoid him?”—Prompted by the advice in your letter, I proposed the former, and we walked toward him. He left his seat, and approached to meet us.

As he drew near he surveyed my countenance with surprise, and addressing himself to Lady Saville, exclaimed,—“ Do these dim eyes deceive me, or is that young fair the daughter of a man who was named Pryer?—“ The same,” said Lady Saville.—“ And the ward of him you call the Earl of Rraxall, is she not?”—“ Miss Pryer has that honour,” replied her Ladyship.—“ O! let her hourly adore High Heaven that she had not *that honour*, as you term it, some eighteen years ago; for had she been so cursed, that fair countenance that now shines the bright emblem of innate purity and unsullied innocence, had been the black index of a soul corrupted by the arts of dissipation, and for ever lost to virtue!—So much for the *honour* of an educa-

education in the immoral school where this honourable Earl presided, in that mansion, where, in *better* times, virtue and valour reigned; but where, in this *modern* Noble's days, the vices and follies of an effeminate age, have almost brought a blush upon the canvas cheeks of his ancestors, that decorate the old walls of his Castle!

At this instant Lady Charlotte, leaning on the arm of her attendant, passed the walk, at the end of which we were sitting.—“ There—There!” cried the old man.—“ Saw you that unhappy wretch?”—“ To whom do you apply that *epithet*,” said Lady Saville, with a frown.—“ To the daughter, to the niece of *murderers*,” replied the old man. Judge my agitation at this

moment, my dear friends, which I seized with trembling to gain the explanation of the former horrid charge thus repeated.

“Reflect Sir,” cried I, “that of those, whom you thus charge with so horrible a crime, one was *my* father; and forgive the freedom I take in requesting you to retract, (or if that be *possible*) to explain so foul an accusation.”—“You must not heed, my dear,” said Lady Saville, ‘what *Marlow* says. We allow *him* to say what he pleases, and I believe he racks his imagination for dismal subjects to declaim upon.”—Hold, my Lady,” exclaimed Marlow.—“You are deceived in the old man, for most unhappily he has not yet exhausted the topics that distress
his

his heart, nor need he fly to the invention of his fancy!"—Then turning to me, his face assumed the aspect of parental fondness, and he took my hand.—
"Young fair," cried he, "I would, I could retract the charge that blots the memory of your parent, but alas! that is impossible!—I can perceive the pain that I occasion thee, and though I appear a rough old man, believe me I can sympathize with afflicted virtue, and I pity you, that you again must hear me say *your father was a murderer!*"
I was seized with such a faintness at this speech, that had he not quickly explained it by the following, I must have sunk to the ground; but his countenance changed from tenderness to rage, and he continued,—“ Yes,

he caused a *sister's death*!—His cruelty to her, his barbarous friendship to the noble fiend, her husband, sent *broken-hearted to the grave* the best of women!—and that death he caused, had for its *Consequence*, the still more cruel destruction of her children, whose infant minds were *poisoned* by the large draughts of vice that he assisted to administer, while the antidotes of reason and religion, which their *murdered* mother would have placed before them, were by his barbarity totally excluded from their view.”

The charge which this last speech contains is surely heinous; but yet I had been prepared for something still more dreadful, and much as I deplore the crimes of my unhappy parent, I own

to you, my friends, that my heart felt almost a transport of joy, when I thus learned that the horrid charge of murder had only for its foundation the fatal story I already knew.

Lady Saville replied to him.—
“ There is something so extravagantly wild in all that you utter, Marlow,” said she, “ that I really shall be afraid to stay in your company.”—“ Why truly,” replied he, “ I have said too much, unless I say more, and that possibly would be trespassing too largely on your patience and your leisure?”—
“ Oh, by no means!” cried I, without reflecting I was answering for another, and that other too, Lady Saville.—
She kindly, however, passed over my involuntary rudeness, and joined in the

answer.—Marlow then proceeded to relate what I have already transcribed from the former part of Lady Charlotte's Memoirs, and in words so similar, that I am induced to believe she drew her information from this very source.

In speaking of the event that placed the Earl of Rraxall in his present possessions, he appeared extremely affected and shed tears;—and when he had related the death of Lady Rraxall, and described the subsequent scenes at the Castle, he thus concluded:—"But let me say no more of this; it pains me, when I reflect upon a contrast of characters so great, as this Being that you stile the Earl of Rraxall, and that truly *noble man* his brother.—The *one* was all nobleness

bleness of soul: his very errors, for who is without them, were the offspring of a generous heart;—his *vices* were the failings of his nature, but his *virtues*, which out-numbered them, were almost above it!—While the other degrades his species by vices that derogate from the dignity of human nature, and lacks one common virtue to countenance his failings.—Of *him* let's say no more; but perhaps there may come a time when *you*, young fair, (addressing himself to me,) may feel an inclination, and find an opportunity to know more of his brother.—It is a tale worth listening to, and I shall feel a mournful pleasure in relating it. Thus saying, he bade us farewell, and we parted.

Upon a review of what Sir Henry informed me of old Marlow, and the severe epithets the old man applies to the Earl of Rraxall, I apprehend there must be something interesting in the story he hinted of the Earl's unfortunate brother, and feel already the *inclination* to hear it; but when I shall find the *opportunity*—I know not, since my return to this place is quite uncertain!—Perhaps I may *never* re-visit the enchanting spot, which I own to you, my friends, I quit with reluctance for the gloomy towers of Rraxall Castle.—Nor is my reluctance lessened by the anticipation of the scenes that must soon take place there; for I much fear, that the *Consequences* of the Earl's neglect in the proper education of his children are rapidly producing the severest

severest punishments of so great a crime in the annihilation of his long cherished hopes!

Adieu! the carriage waits to convey us back to Rraxall Castle.

LETTER VI.

From the SAME to the SAME.

RRAXALL CASTLE.

OUR party in returning to the Castle, Louisa, was joined by the talkative Captain, who, notwithstanding he was on horseback, contrived to keep up a conversation the whole way by walking his horse close to the carriage, which drove *slowly* on account of Lady Charlotte. Without the occurrence of any thing remarkable we arrived at these mouldering remains of antiquity about seven in the evening, and were immediately introduced to the Earl and his son. The former received us in his usual style of *haughty condescen-*

condescension, (if I may be allowed the expression,) and after the first salutations were over, taking my hand, said to his son,—“ Lord Oswell, you will regard this young lady as my ward, and the daughter of Colonel Pryer.” Lord Oswell only bowed, and a profound silence of some minutes followed.—It seemed as if every one was fearful of speaking before the stern eye of the Earl;—even loquacity itself, in the person of Captain Anderson, was dumb for a while. At length Lord Oswell, having gazed for some time upon his sister, broke the silence.—“ My father told me you had been *indisposed*, sister, but I did not think from his *slight* mention that you were *actually dying*.”—“ We too have been told, young Sir,” cried the Earl, start-

ing from his chair, " that you were deficient in intellect, but did not think that you were *actually* mad, until you brave us thus with such repeated proofs of madness.—But since my entreaties fail, learn Sir, that the authority of a parent—" Might have been exerted to some purpose when I was a boy. You *might* have *bent* the twigg." interrupted Lord Oswell.

" Sir Henry Saville," said the Earl, " Lady Saville, Miss Pryer, Captain Anderson, and you, my daughter, look, look all of you at that parricide. He was the favourite of my bosom, the object of my chief anxiety ; whom to render happy has been my chief study. My fond indulgence kept him all his boyish days under my own eye, and

and never parted with him till the accursed hour that I entrusted him to the protection of a travelling tutor, a wretch, who deceived me, and has ruined him. Had he returned my son to me a Drunkard, a Gamester, a Libertine, it would have been *meritorious* in comparison of what he has; for will it be believed, that *my* son, the heir of the illustrious house of Rraxall has imbibed principles, whose aim is the overthrow of monarchy, the abolition of all distinctions of birth, and the introduction of a new order of things, that is to place upon a broad equality the noble and illustrious blood, which animates his own veins with that of a plebeian manufacturer of chairs and tables!—Yet such is the fact, and he glories in avowing it.—Yes, triumphs
in

in the death-blow to all his father's fondest wishes. He scruples not to tell me he *despises* the dignities to which his birth entitles him, and has the matchless effrontery to avow, that he will never acknowledge any other title than that of "*Fellow Citizen*," nor will ever himself assume any other."

When the Earl had ceased, he threw a look of bitter indignation at his son, who thus replied to him:

"And I have the fortitude, or if you will, the *effrontery* to repeat my resolutions, and swear to persevere in them.—As a son, I owe you reverence; yet, Citizen, allow me to observe, that you have in no small degree lessened that reverence which the parental

rental character demands, by the neglect of a parent's duties."——" Ah! and do you assume the *censor* too, boyish philosopher?" exclaimed the Earl with anger and contempt.

" Pardon the interruption, my Lord," said Sir Henry Saville, " but I must observe how very painful it is to witness an altercation of this nature, and conceive that we, who can take no part in *such* a dispute, had better withdraw." We all rose together. " I beg you will remain with us," cried the Earl; " it is perhaps the last interview I shall have with this disciple of the levelling system, and I conjure you to be umpires of the justice of our opposite resolves. We accordingly resumed our seats. " Now Sir," continued

tinued he, " you see before you the destined husband of your sister, whom your apostacy considerably enriches with the possession of estates, which your inebriated mind affects to despise. Here are other friends too, who will all sit patiently to hear the wonderful tale of a Lord Oswell, heir to the most wealthy, as well as the most ancient family in this county, who has been *inspired* by the sophistical eloquence of a disappointed deist with the most philosophical contempt for the laws and religion of his country.—Come, Sir, let us hear it."

" To begin then, Citizen," cried Oswell, not in the least confused, " I shall observe, that a veneration for the laws or religion of the place in which

we

we happen to be born, must originate in prejudice, because children are generally taught to *reverence* these things, before they are capable of *comprehending* them, and many never arrive at that state of mind, which leads to an enquiry into the grounds of their prejudices, who of course are religious and loyal from no other principles, than that their father and mother have been so before them. Now, Citizen, I am an enquirer; and first I would enquire what were the political or theological sentiments that I may be expected to have imbibed in *my* infancy?—

A mother I scarcely knew, and she whom you placed at the head of your family cannot be accused of any prejudices of a religious, or even moral nature." (Here Lord Rraxall started, and

and betrayed evident marks of a deep compunction.) “With respect to political prejudices what can I say that will not have the appearance of offence to you, my father, from whom I must assert, that I have gathered prejudices rather *against* than in *favour* of the privileged orders.”

“Bravo! Bravo!” cried the Earl with a countenance betwixt a grin and a frown; “but go on, Sir, let us hear how the mighty business of your conversion was accomplished.”—“Ridicule is not argument, Citizen, but thus was my mind informed:—Fate placed in your way Lenington, whom you accepted as my tutor. Under his care I left England, but with sensations widely differing from his. I was
elated

elated with the sanguine expectation of enjoying pleasures and levities of more exquisite relish than all that I had enjoyed here:—whilst *he*, fired with the glow of universal civism, was anxious to visit a theatre, where scenes the most interesting the world ever witnessed, were at that time performing, and exulted in the idea of beholding the Bastille of Paris in ruins.—In short I left my father's house a mere machine, that only moved as custom pointed;—my mind a vacuum.

“ The opportunity that Lenington, my tutor thus acquired, was turned by his philanthropy to a generous purpose. He roused the dormant powers of my soul, awoke reflection, and fanned into a flame the stifled embers of my reason.

reason.—A glorious flame! which, whilst it threw the purest rays upon my darkened mind, kindled at the same time the generous love of liberty!—By degrees the frivolous occupations of my mind yielded to the nobler guests that Lenington's philosophy introduced, and that philosophy was confirmed by daily conversation with enlightened men upon the important subjects, which at that time were debated in almost every company. The *Consequences* of this revolution in my principles I was well aware would be a painful task—to avow them, and abide by them. Painful it is, but I will perform it in spite of every obstacle. *Courtesy*, and what the world may stile *good-breeding* must yield to *truth*. I here then swear by the dear name of Liberty, in the presence

fence of you all, and of him who *only* is Supreme, that I will never wear that badge of despotism, a *title*; that I will never own a monarch, or live in any land, except where the rights, the liberties, and as much as possible, the properties of men are equal."

During this speech of Oswell's the Earl discovered alternately grief and rage; and when he concluded, knelt down, and was about to pronounce a curse upon his son, when Sir Henry Saville flew to him.—"Forbear, my Lord, forbear!—Pity the rash conduct of your misled son, and do *not imitate* it!" (How noble, Louisa!) "It is plain, my Lord," continued he, "that the desperate man, his tutor, whom I well know to be a disappointed sycophant,
has

has bestowed uncommon pains to delude the young ingenuous mind committed to his care.—If *he* could persevere so zealously in a bad cause, shall no attempt be made to counteract the evil he has done?”—“ ’Tis fruitless labour,” cried the Earl, who had risen, and was walking about the room in the greatest agitation, “ the whole of yesterday was spent in threatenings or entreaties,”—“ Pardon me, my Lord, I would neither threaten nor entreat Lord Oswell to yield *implicitly* his sentiments to mine.—I venture to affirm that they stand upon a false foundation, and I would contend with him for the truth.”—“ Sir Henry, you amaze me,” cried the Earl. “ *Argue* with him?—What!—dispute upon questions of civil policy logically like a schoolman?
—Do

—Do I conceive your meaning, Sir?—
Do you not hear that he despises king-
ly government, and deems the orders
of nobility an infringement upon the
Rights of Man?”—“ I do, my Lord,
and I would enquire *why* he does so.”
—“ What, Sir Henry!—Parley with
a rebel ?”—“ I do not think Lord
Oswell merits such an epithet. There
is, my Lord, in my opinion, an ex-
treme difference betwixt the rebel, and
he who simply objects to a mode of
government. The former I conceive
to be that man, who would *overturn* the
settled form by violence, whilst the
latter only attacks with ridicule, or
assaults with argument the system he
dislikes; and surely no one, who *really*
understands the English constitution, will
ever shrink from defending it against
false

false argument, or feel any apprehensions that the force of ridicule can ever overturn it. Lord Oswell has declared, that he hates the system of the English government, and I declare that I *admire* the system which Lord Oswell *bates*.—We are at issue then.—Let him convince me that he has discovered another, whose principles embrace less evils, and dispense more benefits to a people, and I am not so prejudiced to *any* form as to deny conviction. But, in return, let me expect from him the same candour, under the same impressions, and I flatter myself that the result will be an acknowledgment on his part, that he has been dazzled by the *novelty* of his opinions, rather than *convinced* by their *justice*.”—“ I will not consent to this enquiring frenzy ; 'tis a pernicious
- *fashion,*

fashion, and fraught with mischief," cried the Earl.—"No, I will hold no parley with him.—Let him hear *my* determination, and then pursue his *own*."—"Then turning to his son, "Yes, thou apostate, thou weather-cock convert to the airy notions of a new-fangled doctrine, hear the declaration of a father, and if you have a heart that *can feel*, shudder and repent! If within a week from this day you recant your present professions, and confess your errors, acknowledge the religion of your country, conform to its laws, and adopt its customs, I will even yet receive you to my arms with transport.—But if you persist in your present detestable opinions, I swear never to behold you more.—I will blot you from my memory, and tear you from

my heart.—I will denounce you to the state as a traitor, and if you escape the axe you merit, may your life be a chain of miseries, and your end be cursed!"

There was something so horrible in this denunciation, Louisa, that I felt myself almost ready to faint when I heard it uttered: no wonder then, at its effects upon Lady Charlotte, who doubtless was comparing in her mind her brother's situation with her own, and applying the dreadful sentence to herself.—She shrieked aloud at the word "*curfed*," and fell senseless from her chair. Sir Henry, with the tenderest solicitude, flew to her assistance.

The

The attention of every one present was now of course directed to Lady Charlotte, who remained a very considerable time without the least symptoms of re-animation, in spite of the efforts that were used.

Imagine my anxiety at this scene. I knelt and administered the usual means to restore her to life, yet trembled with apprehension lest she should betray herself by some sudden ejaculation when her senses returned.

At length her eyelids opened, and she attempted to raise herself from the ground; when perceiving Sir Henry Saville,—“ Oh, Sir,” said she faintly, “ do not bestow so much pains upon a wretch like me, but go and plead

for my poor brother with his offended father; convince Lord Oswell of his folly, reason with him, and with my father."——She then saw the Earl. "Oh, Sir," continued she, "recall that dreadful curse!"—"Pray let her retire," said the Earl; "her mind enfeebled by indisposition is unequal to a trial of this nature, and I was wrong in not considering that; but do, my dear, retire, and compose your spirits."

Lord Oswell, who had been a silent spectator of this scene, now spoke.—"Sister, I feel this proof of your affection," said he, "and will find an opportunity to thank you as I ought." Lady Saville then offered her arm to the unhappy sufferer, who retired with an

an interesting adieu to her brother expressed in her eyes.

I was following them.—“ Miss Pryer,” said the Earl, “ have the goodness to wait a moment.”—I returned—“ Sir Henry, and you Captain Anderson,” continued he, addressing himself to those gentleman, “ have been the witnesses of my oath; to you I commend my son. When he shall think fit to acknowledge his errors, I shall be happy to hear from either of you his resolution, but till then I see him no more.” Then turning to me,—“ Now, Miss Pryer;” said he, and we left the room together.

“ I have my mind so much taken up with my own more particular con-

cerns, child," said the Earl, after we had left the room, "that I might be well excused neglecting yours, but it is not the case.—To-morrow I shall have some few minutes to spare, and wish to see you in my closet at twelve o'clock precisely; then formally bending his head, he left me, and I immediately flew to the poor sufferer, Lady Charlotte, who is at this moment taking the cordial of the wretched, the oblivion of sleep.

She wakes.—Adieu, dear friends.

LETTER VII.

From the SAME to the SAME.

AT the appointed hour, Louisa, I waited upon my guardian, not a little anxious to learn the occasion of the interview.

After some matters of form, which his Lordship never omits upon these *gracious* occasions, he opened the business, for which he had bestowed on me the honour of a private audience.

“ Could I have foreseen,” said he, “ the perplexity in which the conduct of my son has involved me, I would

not have added to the weight of my cares by accepting the executorship of your father's will—but it is done, and I think myself in some degree repaid by the proper sense you appear to have of the obligation.”—“ I flatter myself, my Lord,” said I, “ that my conduct better than any words will express my gratitude.”—“ I hope it will. You appear open and ingenuous, and above the silly affected airs that distinguish the majority of your sex, and upon that ground it is that I have brought you here.” I bowed. He was silent for a minute or two, looking steadfastly in my face, and then said—“ You will in less than two years, child, be in possession of a very ample fortune, and that consideration added to your youth, I *may* say beauty, cannot

not fail to insure you a number of suitors.—Why do you blush, child?—There will be nothing uncommon in it.—Wealth and beauty are powerful attractions, and will doubtless draw into your train men of every description. *Here* indeed we are almost secluded from society, but it was my intention upon Lord Oswell's return to have visited the metropolis, to have presented him at Court, and by entering into the frivolities of fashion for a time, to have aroused Lady Charlotte from her lethargy, which it is possible, may have been increased by our sudden change from the most trifling and light to the most exemplary and dignified scenes of higher life. How this week will terminate with respect to my son I know not; possibly the ad-

vice of Sir Henry Saville may effect something; but whether it does or not it is my intention to be in London next week. I have ordered my residence in Portland Place to be in readiness for the reception of the family by the Thursday; and as it will be your first entrance into the higher circles, you will become the subject of general conversation, and of course before this day fortnight I shall be solicited by perhaps fifty of your admirers for my influence in the disposal of you. Now this makes it necessary, that I should know something of your mind, child, upon the subject of marriage."—"Indeed, my Lord," cried I, "I have no thoughts to offer you. I assure you, my Lord, I have *never* yet turned my mind for a moment towards the subject, as at all relative

lative to myself.”—“Very well.—I congratulate you upon such a proof of your good sense, and I shall feel myself the more strongly bound to consider your true interest and felicity.” He then rose from his chair, and presenting me a hundred pound bill, requested I would consult Lady Saville in preparing myself for what he termed my appearance, and dismissed me.

I walked into the Park to give my mind an opportunity of reflecting a little upon the new prospects this unexpected journey to London presented. I was returning, and I believe I looked somewhat gloomy, when who should unluckily meet me but Sir Henry Saville.—“What has happened, Miss Pryer?” said he.—“Nothing of very great consequence,

Sir, and yet is something that I own does not please me.—We are to be in London next week.”—“ So I understand,” replied he ; “ but are you displeased with that ? There are few young ladies who have so much to display as Miss Pryer, that would prefer the solitude of Rraxall Castle to the thronged circles of gay London.”—“ It would be mere affectation,” said I, “ if I were to say I *preferred* the country to town, since I have only tried the former.—I know the pleasures of retirement, but I am so much a stranger to the manners of the Great in their London sphere, that I am afraid I shall disgrace Lord Rraxall and his friends by my ignorance.”—“ Of what are you ignorant, Miss Pryer?—of the affected airs, of
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the studied graces, and mechanical motions of a *fine* lady, which any one may learn, but which no female of sense ever practices?"—"But certainly, Sir, you must allow that there are customs and habits exclusively belonging to the circles of fashion, to be ignorant of which denotes at least a *rustic* education."—"Granted," replied he. "But there is nothing to censure in the *rural* maid, unless she should assume the unnatural air of town-bred ladies, and that I hope will never be the error of Miss Pryer, who will alter for the *worse*, whenever she changes from what she *is*.—But is the day fixed for our departure?" (Mark, Louisa, how he can pay a compliment, and prevent a reply.) "Thursday se'ennight."—"Will Lady Charlotte
be

be able to undertake the journey?" said he.—" Indeed I doubt it," replied I.—Do you think, Sir Henry, that Lord Rraxall would permit her to remain at the Castle?"—" Certainly not," said he. " If he is resolved upon the journey nothing can prevent it."—" Do you suppose Lord Oswell will be prevailed upon to go to Court?"—" My opinion respecting Oswell is doubtful. I think he has a good heart, but unhappily, as his education was totally neglected in his youth, I fear the wild notions which Lenington has instilled into his mind, are too deeply rooted ever to be eradicated."—" He cannot, I presume, remain in England if he retains his present sentiments."—" Certainly not, without gross inconsistency."—" Poor young

young man!" exclaimed I. "But do you not intend to use some efforts, Sir, to convince him of his folly in this week of probation that is allowed him?—If he possess, as you say, a good heart, and his only error is an enquiring mind, unhappily directed by *false lights*, surely, Sir, truth will in the end prevail, and crown your efforts with success." "Unfortunately, Miss Pryer," replied Sir Henry, "the son inherits no small portion of his father's warmth of temper. These sentiments are the first that caught his attention, and they possess a dazzling lustre, which captivates the young fancy so powerfully, that nothing short of bitter experience can convince it of their deceit.—Artless himself, and listening only to the voice of simple
nature,

nature, that theory must consequently most delight him, which nearest approaches to a *state of nature*, whilst the restraints and distinctions which experience has found requisite to introduce into a state of society, being unnecessary to compel *him* to be *just*, are considered as infringements on his *rights*. To reconcile such a mind, therefore, to the *evils* of civil governments is no easy task. To assert that there *exists* no evil, would be giving him at once the victory, by taking a false ground. The only method that is likely to succeed, is that to which neither Oswell nor Lord Rraxall will accede; a *calm discussion of such evils, and the consequences that would result from their removal*. But here the inexperience of the young, and the prejudices of the

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the old man would be insuperable bars to the discovery of truth. But I fatigue you, Miss Pryer, with such discourse as this. It is as Lord Rraxall would say, "*Acting the schoolman.*" Happy would it be for society, thought I, if Lord Rraxall and all other Lords were *just such schoolmen.*"

This conversation brought us to the Castle. "Will you now, Miss Pryer," said he, "honour me with a few minutes audience upon the subject of Lady Charlotte?" I bowed assent.

We retired to the library, where I briefly acquainted him, that I conceived the indisposition of Lady Charlotte *did* result from her unconquerable
aversion

aversion to the arbitrary measures of her father in the disposal of her hand ; and added, that there appeared to me such difficulties in the way of that union, that I would venture to assert *it was impossible.*

“ Enough, enough, Madam,” cried Sir Henry. “ Pray do me the favour to relieve the mind of Lady Charlotte as early as possible; tell her, Madam, that the same sense of honour, which forbids my soliciting the hand of *another*, however prompted by inclination, will *never* permit me to occasion her the pain of a refusal, or suffer me to think for a moment upon an alliance, in which the feelings are not only *neglected*, but *violated.*”

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He then bowed and retired in evident confusion, and left me to ponder upon his words, and conduct—to compare *his* generosity, *his nobility of soul* with the conduct and sentiments of the Earl of Rraxall.—A comparison—oh how much to the advantage of Sir Henry Saville!

I have made Lady Charlotte comparatively a happy woman. The dread of receiving the offer of Sir Henry's hand is ended. The future welfare of her babe is provided for, and the poor Lady experiences a tranquillity of mind, to which she has long been a stranger.

Thus far my absence from my dear friends has been productive of some
good

good, which is a consideration that lessens the regret with which I too often reflect upon Ormond Parfonage. Adieu.

I have made Lady Chelmsford comparatively a happy woman. The danger of receiving the offer of Sir Henry's hand is avoided. The future wants of her babe is provided for, and the poor lady experiences a tranquillity of mind to which she has long been a stranger. Thus far my absence from my dear friends has been productive of some good.

LETTER VIII.

MISS BERRINGTON *to* MRS. EMERSON.

MARGATE.

TO-MORROW, Emerson, by seven in the morning, my brother's landau will be at the door to convey himself, and your humble servant, with Pendant and his sister Lucilla, to the seat of the Rraxalls.

How much I dislike the party, and the journey, or how much I regret leaving dear delightful Margate in the very height of the season, and crowded with fashion, I need not tell my Emerson. But you who know the
aching

aching heart I have long been struggling to conceal, you, who know the fierce conflict of pride and love, of jealous rage and flattering hope, that has so long distracted me, congratulate your friend.—Yes, Emerson, the clouds that have so long obscured all prospect of accomplishing my wishes are at this moment dispersing, and I hail once more the hope, the glorious hope of conquest!—The spell, the horrible enchantment that has so long encircled the heart of my Henry, and hitherto blunted every dart of Cupid, at length is broken!—Hear it, and hear it with rapture. Sir Henry Saville has declared he will *never solicit* the honour of Lady Charlotte's hand!—The poor thing herself is visibly in a deep decline, and quite broken-hearted!

ed!—I absolutely *pity* her now, though I own there is a triumph even in my compassion.—O jealousy, how mean, how miserable dost thou render thy wretched victims!—When I viewed this Lady Charlotte as a rival, (Perish the hated sound,) my mind glowed with indignation, hatred, and revenge.—Now that she is no longer an object of my suspicion or my envy, her sorrows have found the powerful plea of suffering humanity in a breast uncorroded with jealousy, and I would exert all my power to serve her.

But methinks you say, whence came this intelligence?—Thus—The Earl has promised to Pendant the hand of a Miss Pryer, his ward, with a fortune of fifty thousand pounds. He was to
have

have been introduced to the girl in Portland Place, as the Earl had planned a visit to the metropolis in order to *present* Oswell!—Well,—my good cousin Pendant and his sister Lucilla, whose ambition, you know, it is to be Lady Oswell, were elated with the thoughts of their visit to the town residence of the Earl; and my brother and I were under orders to quit Margate at a moment's notice, and accompany the *expecting pair*, when a long and dismal epistle from Rraxall Castle changed the whole plan of operations. For lo! the simple Oswell, whom every body but Lucilla Pendant wrote down an ignoramus, has returned to England an enthusiastic disciple of the Gallic School; and has sworn enmity, eternal enmity with kings, titles, stars, garters,

garters, and coronets!—The half-distracted father storms, swears, and frets most tragically at the *Consequences* of his *own neglect* in the early part of his son's education, and threatens the poor citizen most unmercifully for having imbibed those principles against which he had no better to oppose.—But his rage has been ineffectual thus far, and the undaunted Oswell stands his ground, not only a sincere convert, but an absolute bigot. Poor Lucilla cries about the house like a child that has lost its toy, for very vexation at the loss of a coronet.”

The civic sentiments of Oswell of course prevent his presentation at the royal levee, and thus our journey to

London is changed for a visit to Rraxall Castle.

By the same packet that brings the above letter I have received one from Anderson, who is the confidant of Lord Rraxall, and my firm friend. He tells me all that I have written, and a vast deal more, which want of time obliges me to omit. Suffice it to say, my Emerson, that what he says concerning Lady Charlotte and Sir Henry has absolutely created me afresh.

This evening I take a farewell of the delights which this charming place affords, and to-morrow set off for the dreary mansion of the Rraxall's ; but
I go

I go in the fond anticipation of a glorious conquest, the attainment of my heart's proudest hope!—Yes, Henry, high and towering as is thy noble spirit, thou must submit, for my very existence feeds upon the persuasion that thou wilt be mine.—Adieu!

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.